



**MEDFORD, MA
COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN**

**Report DRAFT
July 2022**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

[In progress, to be completed]

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INTRODUCTION: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PURPOSE & PROCESS

A Shared Vision for the Future

Medford's comprehensive plan is a 50,000-foot view that will inform the City's policies and investments over the next ten-thirty years. The plan is an essential guide that provides a clear framework with greater predictability and consistency for residents, business owners, partners and advocates, City staff, and developers who - together - will shape the future evolution of Medford. It provides a long-range look at the City, envisioning a thirty year planning horizon, with a closer focus on actions for the next ten years. Perhaps most importantly, the plan is shaped by extensive community engagement and is a reflection of the community's vision and values.

Going forward, the plan will provide a basis for decision-making about climate adaptation and mitigation practices, land use planning and redevelopment, historic and cultural support, budget preparation

and capital improvement planning for public facilities and services, and economic development. It will also guide and inform upcoming changes to zoning, policies and programs, and shape the City's capital improvement plan.

Medford has a strong planning legacy but has not previously undertaken a true comprehensive master plan. The 1964 General Plan and 1988 Strategic Plan offer earlier citywide, strategic positions; yet, the city and region have changed significantly in the intervening decades. Many topical or focused area studies have been recently completed, such as the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. The comprehensive plan builds on these other reports, studies, outreach efforts, and policies undertaken by the City and partners in recent years, integrating them into a coordinated vision.

Alignment with Massachusetts General Laws

Under Massachusetts General Laws, master planning is governed by Chapter 41, Section 81D. This section requires that the plan address nine elements, including a goals and policies statement and an implementation plan. This section requires that the plan address nine elements: land use, housing, economic development, history and culture, open space, mobility, and public facilities. It must include goals, policies, and an implementation plan. It also requires an economic development supplement with a summary of the municipality's goals for

economic development, affordable housing, and the preservation of open space.

Within that framework, there is a great deal of latitude to craft a master plan that fits the individual needs for the community. For Medford, the state's planning direction provided a jumping off point to create a community-driven plan that both addresses the topics within Section 81D and emphasizes the areas that the Medford community is most interested in and those it is most concerned about.



LAND USE



HOUSING



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



HISTORY, ARTS, & CULTURE



OPEN SPACE & RECREATION



PUBLIC SERVICES



MOBILITY

Figure 1. Medford's Comprehensive Plan is structured around elements that address the state's master planning requirements and emphasize the areas that are most important to the Medford community.

BACKGROUND & CURRENT CONTEXT

Medford's past, present, and future

Medford, MA is a city of 57,771 located in Middlesex County. Flanked by the Mystic and Malden Rivers, Medford is home to Tufts University and holds a place in Revolutionary War history. Medford's unique characteristics; namely its affordability, historic charm, parks system, and convenient location within the Boston metro area, make it an ideal place for young people and young families.

In recent years, the city has grown steadily and the population has diversified. At the same time, Medford faces a number of

challenges impacting the greater Boston area and specific to the city itself. Limited housing stock, economic leakage, flooding and storm surge from climate change, transit connectivity, and aging buildings and infrastructure all pose threats to Medford's progress if not planned for and addressed. These challenges present opportunities to leverage and preserve what has worked well for the city in the past, and capitalize on the community's innovative spirit to create real, sustainable, and just solutions that improve Medford's overall quality of life.

98%
of all buildings were built before 2000

Population growth rate 2010-2020

6.2%
Medford

7.2%
Middlesex County

Medford is young, diverse, and poised to keep growing.

Medford has grown by 6.2% in the past decade and is projected to keep growing to reach 59,465 people by 2030. Medford's population is younger overall than other cities in the state of Massachusetts: residents aged 20-35 make up nearly a third (31%) of the population, in comparison to the state, in which this age group represents about a fifth (21%) of the population. This discrepancy is likely due to the amount of growth that 20-35 year-olds have seen in recent years. From 2000 to 2018, the 20-35 year-old age group grew 25% in Medford, far greater than the 1% growth this population saw statewide over the same period.

Given its younger population, two-thirds of Medford households (66%) are one or two-person households. The city has a lower level of families in comparison to the state: in Medford, 56% of households are families, whereas in Massachusetts broadly, families represent 63% of households.

Racially and ethnically, Medford is more diverse than the state of Massachusetts overall. The city has a diversity index of 53.2, which is slightly less diverse than neighboring communities such as Somerville and Everett, which have a diversity index of 64.9 and 80.3, respectively. Medford has a

white majority of 71.9% of the population, followed by 8.9% Black residents, 11.4% Asian residents, and 7.8% other races. Recently, Medford has seen significant growth in nonwhite residents, particularly amongst the city's Asian population. In 2019, 23% of Medford residents identified as people of color, up from 19% in 2010. Of Medford residents, 5% identify as Hispanic or Latino, notably lower than the proportion of Hispanic or Latino residents statewide, at 12%. Acknowledging this growing diversity, on September 30, 2020, the City of Medford and the Mayor's Office released a "Social Justice Roadmap" to guide future efforts to increase equity and inclusion in the community at large.

Medford's diversity is reflected in the languages spoken among households. According to 2020 American Community Survey 5-Year estimates, nearly a third of Medford residents (29.4%) speak a language other than English at home. Of this percentage, 5.7% speak Spanish at home, 15.7% speak an Indo-European language other than Spanish, 7.2% speak Asian and Pacific Island languages, and 0.8% speak another language that does not fall into one of these groups.

Medford residents are well-educated and earn more than other Massachusetts residents, but earn less than comparable cities in the metropolitan area.

More than half of all Medford residents (53%) have a bachelor's degree or higher, while at the state level, 44% of residents have the same educational credentials. Nearly half (49%) of Medford households earn more than \$100,000 annually. The median household income for Medford is \$92,363, which is lower than the county median household income of \$97,012, but

higher than the state at \$77,378. The city has long been accessible to different income groups, as evidenced by its diversifying population, and will face challenges to continue to balance this accessibility without pricing residents out. As the city continues to grow in population, residents are increasingly feeling the pressure of a limited affordable housing stock.



Figure II. Medford was founded in 1630 and established as a city in 1892, making it one of the oldest settlements in Massachusetts.



LAND USE

Development peaked in the early 20th century, establishing the current land use patterns seen today.

The vast majority of building construction in Medford occurred before 1960, with 84% of construction taking place between 1900 and 1959, according to the Medford Assessor's office. Future development in Medford must carefully consider how to integrate new development into existing land use patterns, and how to strategically plan city growth to reinforce values and needs. Thirty-five percent of Medford is zoned for residential land use, the highest land use behind rights of way (street areas). Residential development makes up 85% of the total assessed value of Medford and 83%

of total built square footage. The majority of residential zoning consists of single-family housing, which comprises 1/5th of Medford. After residential development, the next largest land use is commercial development at 5% of total land, 7% of total assessed value, and 8% of total built square footage. Future changes to the zoning ordinance and linkage programs present opportunities to utilize the limited available parcels for housing, economic development, climate change mitigation, and community health needs.

Medford's Population Over Time

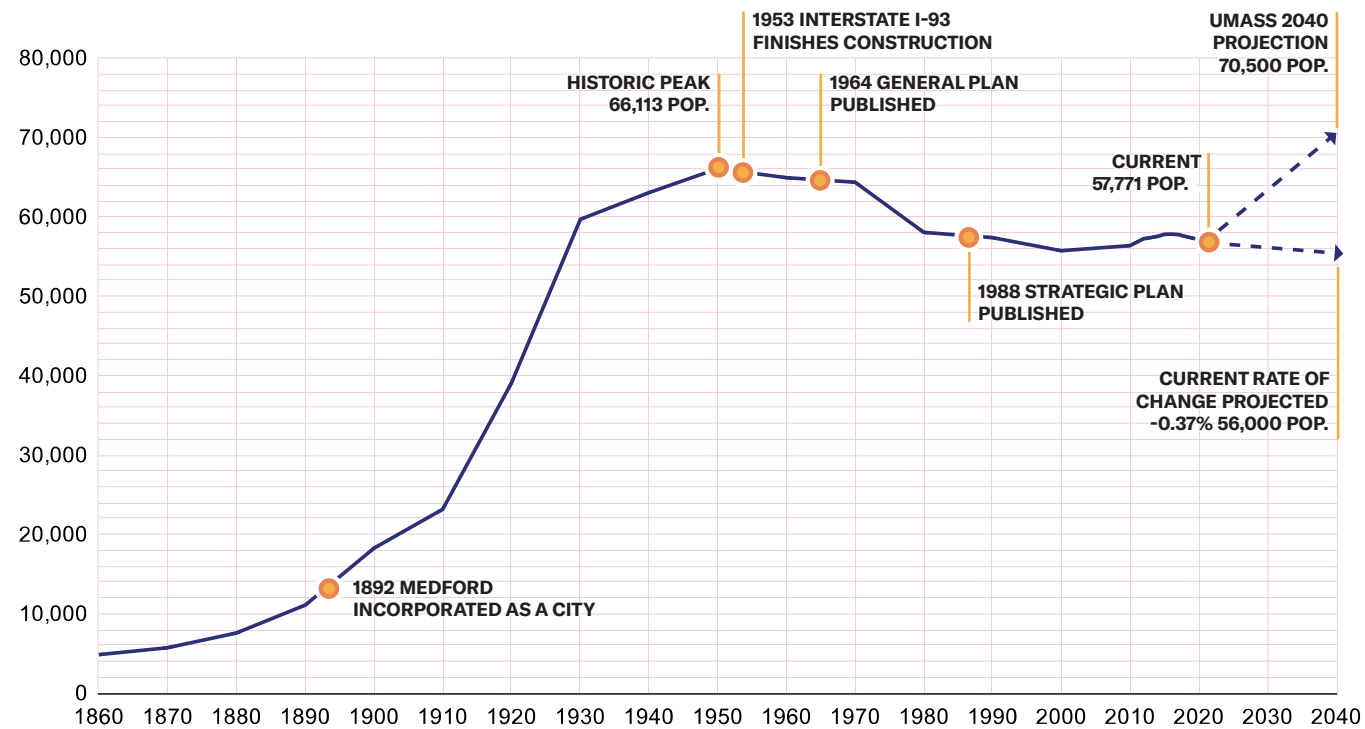
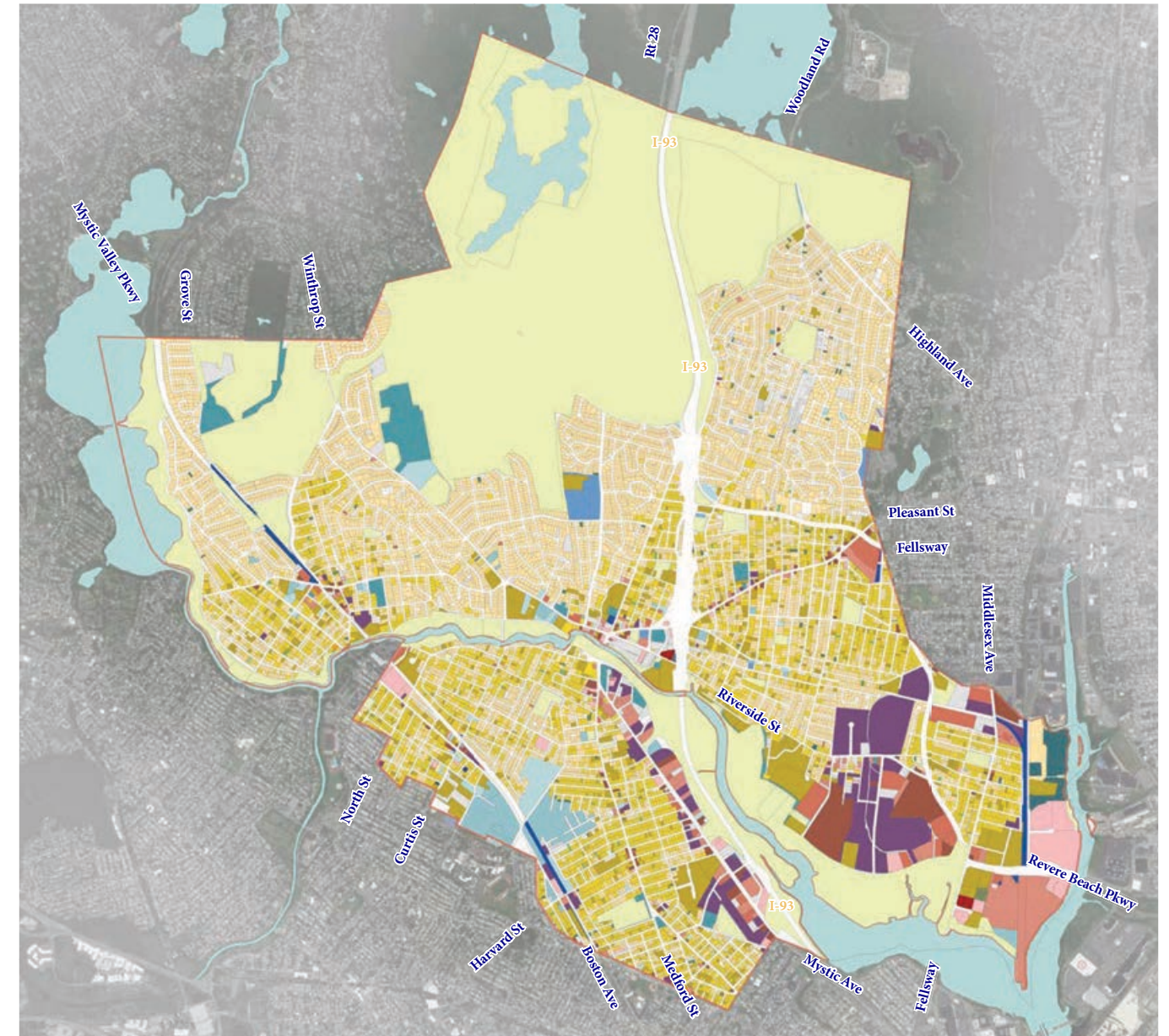


Figure III. Medford Population Over Time. Source: ACS Five-Year Estimates; MAPC (2014); UMass Donahue Institute (2015)



Medford Current Land Use Map

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Cultural/Education | Residential - Medium Density |
| Hospital | Residential - High Density/Group |
| Hotels | Residential - Mixed Use |
| Industrial | Commercial/Retail |
| Municipal/Government | Automotive |
| Office | Open Space |
| Public Service | Vacant |
| Residential - Low Density | |

Figure IV. Current Land Use in Medford. Source: City of Medford, Assessor's Office



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tufts is core to Medford's economy as a major anchor institution; yet, most residents work outside the city.

Tufts University is a private university of about 12,000 students. Its student body, staff, and nonprofit status are a steady presence for both employment and economic development and real estate outcomes in the city. The student population provides an economic base and draws future residents to the area, and the university is a significant employer, employing 3,500 people. At 49%, almost half of the people employed in Medford work in education,

health care, and science, which reflects the university's presence.

The majority of Medford residents (92%) work outside of the city. Of this group, most work in Boston, followed by Cambridge, Somerville, Woburn, and Waltham. Conversely, the majority of Medford's labor force is from outside the city (88%), and of this group about half (51%) are from elsewhere in Middlesex County.

92%

of employed residents work outside the city

\$4B

annual sales led by construction, retail & professional sectors

MEDFORD BUSINESS DISTRICTS

- Medford Square
- South Medford
- Mystic Avenue Corridor
- West Medford
- Hillside
- Haines Square
- East Medford
- Wellington

Medford is home to eight business districts, with opportunities to keep more spending inside the city.

Although the majority of the city is zoned for residential, Medford is home to traditional squares and commercial corridors. The eight business districts in Medford support local businesses and constitute the majority of economic activity for the city. Medford Square alone accounts for 18% of the businesses in Medford, while East Medford generates 14% of total sales for the city.

account for the highest levels of leakage at nearly \$75 million, followed by clothing retailers. This loss presents the opportunity to expand localized economic development and provide sufficient financial support for critical investments within the city.

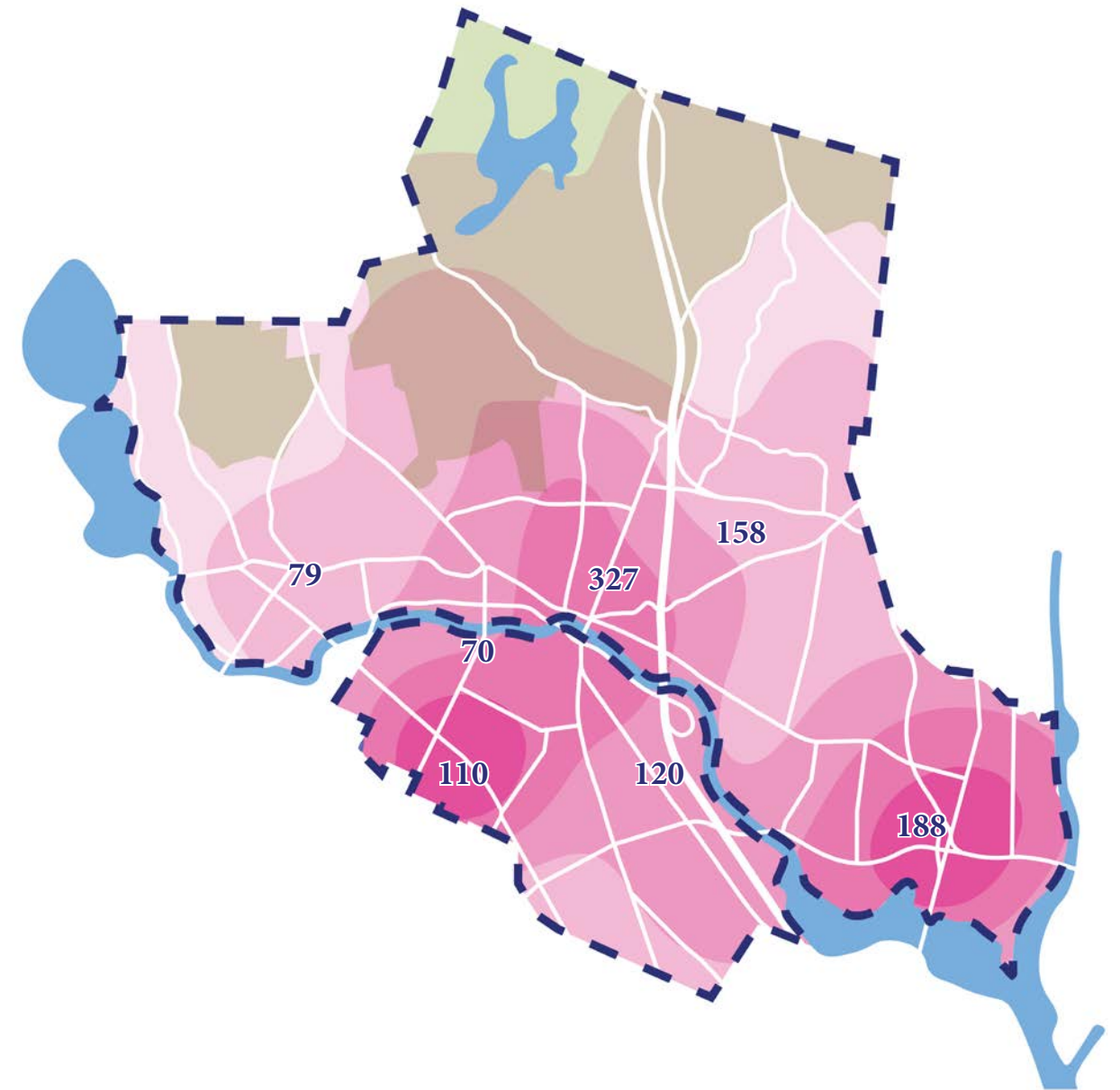
As Medford grows and diversifies, it presents an opportunity for the city to address inequities in access to affordable housing and economic opportunities. The 2020 Social Justice Roadmap seeks to define indicators and objectives around justice so that Medford provides access to opportunities and a high quality of life for all residents, and may be utilized to refine existing community development goals.

As Medford continues to develop into a regional city, economic growth and development strategies seek to strike the right balance between retail spending within Medford and retail spending outside of Medford. "Leakage" refers to the revenue lost when Medford residents spend money on retailers outside the city, which amounted to \$266 million in 2020. Grocery stores

Retail Leakage

Retail leakage is a metric generated during a leakage analysis, a comparative study that estimates the difference between the total retail spending of Medford residents and the total income generated by local Medford businesses, or, in other words, local retail demand versus local retail supply. Retail leakage evaluates how much money residents spend in total in a given

year, on groceries, for example, compared to the combined revenue of Medford grocery stores. Thusly, retail leakage indicates that Medford residents spent \$74.6 million more on groceries than Medford grocers made in revenue in 2020. It is important to note that this specific analysis only refers to retail spending and not overall economic leakage or surplus.



Data source: Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD)

Job Density (Number of Jobs Per Square Mile) Map

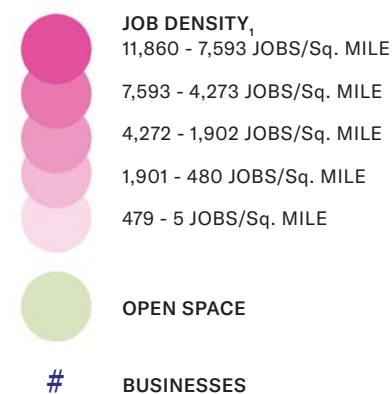


Figure V. Job Density in Medford



HOUSING

Small businesses and the affordable housing market need increased support.

Medford's relatively young population further complicates foundational affordable housing issues of limited supply, land use restrictions, rising cost of housing, and aging housing infrastructure. The recently completed Housing Production Plan noted that the city currently lacks the multifamily housing it needs to support young residents. Multifamily housing makes up 67% of Medford housing stock, a smaller proportion than comparable communities of Somerville (90%) and Watertown (77%). Additionally, there is a sizable gap between those residents eligible for housing assistance and available subsidized units—7,500 Medford households eligible for subsidized housing are not served because of lack of supply.

In an effort to increase this supply, in 2019, the City introduced Inclusionary Zoning stipulations stating that all new construction

consisting of ten or more units must provide affordable units at 10-15% of the total units constructed at or below 80% of the area median income, or AMI. The Massachusetts state goals for affordable housing dictate a goal of 10% of housing units being affordable housing. As of July 2022, Medford needs an additional 641 subsidized housing units, or SHI, to make this happen.

Medford also experiences a lack of “middle” housing, which specifically refers to those housing options that fall in between single family homes and multi-family apartments, such as duplexes and townhomes that are typically 4-8 units, but can be up to 12 units. Currently, the city's housing consists of 42% single-family and 27% two-unit buildings. Thirteen percent are 3-19 units and the remaining 18% are more than 20 units per structure.

Share of residential in multi-family units:

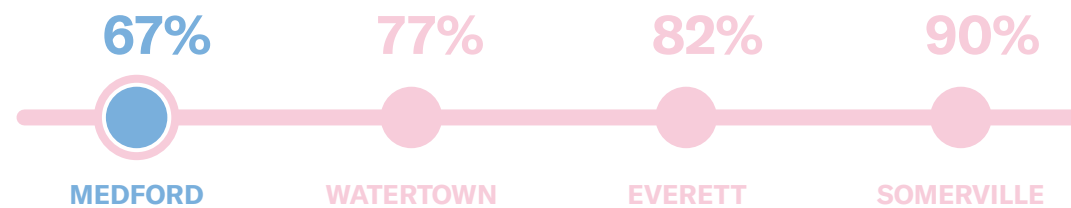


Figure VI. Future housing development in Medford must provide affordable and multi-family units to meet the demand of young families.



MOBILITY

Once a “Streetcar Suburb” of Boston, today, Medford has urgent transit needs of its own.

Medford is served by the MBTA through multiple bus lines, the Orange Line, and Lowell Line commuter rail, connecting it to the larger region of Metro Boston. Medford does not have a central transit hub for the ten MBTA bus routes that service the area, and the system would be better served by a hub in Medford Square, as eight of these routes pass through the center of town. Likewise, there is a need to better connect Medford's current rail and bus transit network through broader multimodal investment and complete streets. Major new transit investment is arriving to Medford in the form of the Green Line Extension (GLX), an expansion of the light rail system into Medford at two new stations either inside or within walking distance of city boundaries.

Medford's Complete Streets policy, instituted in 2016, calls for improvements to road infrastructure, amongst other pivotal transit investments, to make the city's streets more accessible to different forms of transportation and safe for all user groups. As of 2022, Medford's walk score is 68, or “somewhat walkable,” and its bike network

is fragmented. Additional recent studies and plans inform transit policy and investment, notably the Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, released in March 2016, and the Medford Square Priority Roadways Improvement Study, which provides a detailed analysis of this critical, central node and potential recommendations for transit-oriented development. Road Safety Audits provide important data related to improving the transit network to reduce collisions and make streets more comfortable and accessible for residents across different modes of transportation.

In March 2021, the city released the Parking Policy and Enforcement Commission Report, which provided various recommendations for improving internal governance of transit in the city, and thus strengthening mobility within the city. The report notes that both a Department of Transportation and Parking Program Review Board are needed, and offers specific directives to streamline parking within the city through the implementation of new programs and processes.



Figure VII. Although the city is well-served by transit, better and safer routes and connections are needed.



OPEN SPACE, RECREATION, & NATURAL RESOURCES

Medford's plentiful regional and neighborhood open spaces are an asset the city can leverage to combat climate change.

Medford contains over 1,800 acres of park space, comprising neighborhood parks, school fields, plazas, cultural and historical landmarks, and regional natural resources. Regional natural resources, such as the Fells and the Mystic River, connect Medford to a larger open space network and emphasize the interconnectedness of neighboring communities to Medford.

With 34% of the city's open space dedicated to parkland, Medford is a rare community where the overwhelming majority of residents, 99.7%, live within a ten-minute walk to a park. However, many parks in the city's inventory are in need of maintenance. Of the 44 parks listed in the 2019-2026 Medford Open Space and Recreation Plan, about 30% are in "good condition" (of which overall quality varies within this category), 50% are considered to be in "fair" condition, and about 11% are in poor condition. The plan provides a detailed reference document

of city goals and initiatives to improve and maintain the health of Medford's parks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed the importance of open space as an integral component of a healthy city. The realities of climate change present new opportunities to utilize open space to mitigate the impacts of storm surge and flooding in Medford. Unifying these two concerns are a greater story of environmental equity in Medford: 20 block groups within the city have one or more qualifying features of environmental justice communities, an EPA designation that recognizes specific vulnerabilities to environmental hazards based on socioeconomic marginalization. Relevant documents such as the Resilience Hubs report and the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan present valuable actions at the intersection of climate resilience and public health.

PARK ACRES PER 1,000 RESIDENTS

31.4
MEDFORD

9.9
NATIONAL AVERAGE



Figure VIII. Medford has more than 3 times more park acres per thousand residents than the national average.



HISTORIC & CULTURAL RESOURCES

Medford's rich history and many historical sites influence the character and cultural identity of the city.

Medford was incorporated in 1892, after its founding as a Massachusetts settlement in 1630. Prior to the arrival of British colonists, the land that is now Medford belonged to the Pawkuckeket. The city has three nationally designated historic districts: Middlesex Fells Reservoirs Historic District, Old Ship Street Historic District, and Middlesex Canal Historic District and Archaeological District. Two historic districts are City of Medford-Designated: Hillside Avenue Historic District and Marm Simonds Historic District.

Of Medford's many historic structures, notable buildings include The Royall House

and Slave Quarters, once the home of Sarah Bradlee Fulton and a place George Washington visited during the Revolutionary War. The Royall House and Slave Quarters are National Historic Landmarks and one of four non-municipal historic buildings and sites in Medford. City-owned historic buildings include the Chevalier Theater and Brooks Estate. Seven historic school buildings have been repurposed through adaptive reuse as offices and residences. The City of Medford Community Preservation Plan provides a detailed account of buildings as surveyed between 2010 and 2017.

Lack of institutional capacity around arts and culture causes gaps in funding and programming.

Recent documents have illustrated the need to expand the arts and culture sector in Medford to help maintain cherished arts landmarks, generate more programming and events, and bolster artist employment. In 2016, the Mayor Burke Cultural Affairs Recreation Committee Report provided

specific recommendations, and the Medford Mayoral Transition Committee Report from 2020 suggests similar action items to institutionalize arts and culture within city government and create new funding streams, partnerships, and strategic investments for the sector.



PUBLIC FACILITIES

Medford needs a central maintenance and management agency to streamline capital improvements.

At the moment, Medford does not have an internal agency dedicated to maintenance and improvement of public structures and infrastructure. According to the City of Medford Capital Improvement Plan FY2021-2026, the lack of a central agency contributes to a fragmented approach to improvements that often results in deferred

maintenance, inefficient spending and going over budget, and issuing quick fixes to problems that require longer-term solutions and investments. A central organizing body would help both track and synchronize the capital needs and current conditions of city buildings, open space, and transit, water, and sewer infrastructure within Medford.

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

The strategies contained within the plan will guide future transportation choices, help balance new mixed-use development with stable neighborhoods, shape reinvestment in parks and trails, support climate resilient decisions, and inform ongoing community conversations. The plan is a tool to align community ideas, partner initiatives, and private development with the City's goals and its capital projects, policies, and program changes to guide future investments so that "the whole is

greater than the sum of its parts." It will inform future zoning changes and capital projects, but it does not directly change the Zoning Ordinance or assign funding. Future processes will be undertaken to revise the Zoning Ordinance, to design capital projects, and to develop budgets. Rather, the document should serve as a foundation to measure decisions against, ensuring that future changes are moving Medford in the right direction according to its community vision.

To achieve this coordinated approach, the plan takes both a long-view and describes near-term actions:

A 30 Year Vision

The plan sets a high level vision for the City's future direction through a series of five community-created themes. These themes are distilled from extensive community feedback and analysis into recurring ideas. Goals support each vision theme and express desired outcomes for the future. Medford's goals are both broad and high-reaching, yet specific enough to be impactful.

A 10 Year Action Plan

Beyond the long-range vision, the plan includes tangible objectives and actions that will guide policies, future land use decisions, and investments over the next ten years. These objectives and actions are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bound acts whose implementation will bring Medford closer to achievement of its goal. Actions directly support these objectives. Specific and attainable, actions are tied to implementation strategies through identification of responsible parties, partners, benchmarks to track progress, and general timelines and funding sources.

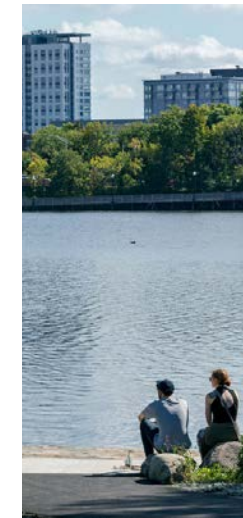


Figure IX. This comprehensive plan provides an outline for an accessible, safe, healthy, vibrant, and resilient Medford through a strategic vision and implementation plan.

CHARTING THE FUTURE

This Plan Needs You: Developing a Community Vision

Medford's Comprehensive Plan was created through a collaborative process led by staff from the Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability, guided by a community Steering Committee, informed by local and regional partners, and with support from the Mayor's Office and other City departments. Most importantly, it was created over an eighteen month process with extensive

engagement and feedback from Medford residents. The plan began in the Spring of 2021 and concluded in Fall of 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, much of the large group public engagement was held online or through socially distanced outdoor measures. The process followed four phases of plan development:

1. Plan Start-Up
2. Understanding Today (analysis of current conditions and needs in Medford)
3. Community Visioning (development of project themes, vision statement, and goals)
4. Framing the Future (development of actionable recommendations and implementation strategies)



Figure X. The implementation of the Medford Comprehensive Plan requires community input, participation, and action.

Steering Committee

At the beginning of the process, an open call was shared for community volunteers to join the plan's Steering Committee. The Committee included passionate residents from all Medford neighborhoods, local business owners, and youth from Medford High School, each with their own interests

and concerns for the future of the city. The Steering Committee met five times during the planning process to steer the project at significant milestones, helped spread the word to others to participate in the plan, and shaped the implementation steps.

Focus Groups, Interviews, and Committees/Commissions.

Approximately twenty focus groups and interviews with topical experts, advocates, city staff and partners were held at various points during the process. They provided feedback on topics such as arts and

culture, history, transportation, housing and development, small business needs, open space and recreation, regional systems, disability community needs, and youth needs.

Community Participation

Ultimately, the plan was created by and for the residents, visitors, and workers in Medford. Three public workshops, a dedicated website, custom videos, an online interactive map, newsletter updates, interactive activities, pop-up activities at

local events, and social media campaigns have increased awareness about the plan and solicited community, stakeholder, and staff feedback. These outreach moments included:

- Community information and activities at over ten events in the summer and fall of 2021, including Clippership Day, Concerts at Condon Shell, Mystic River Celebration, Harvest Your Energy Festival and more.
- Information shared directly with residents, including distribution of over 1,750 postcards and 15,000 residents reached via direct mail.
- Active participation in the online mapping tools including over 1,000 unique pins and nearly 800 comments.
- Over 1,900 unique visitors learned information from the dedicated plan website.
- Two promotional videos were shared online and on Local Medford Community Media.

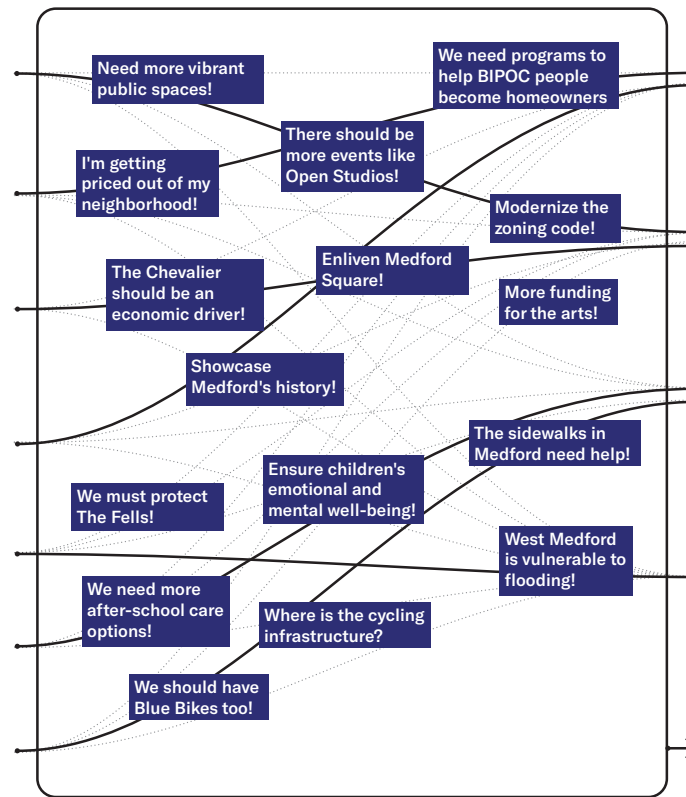
MA GENERAL LAW TOPICS & THE DEVELOPMENT OF PLAN THEMES

Through a combination of community feedback and analysis findings, five overarching themes were identified that captured Medford's priority areas for the plan to focus on. These five themes were directly driven by community conversations, and provide a way to tie back to the topics noted in MA General Law directions about comprehensive planning, but to think about them through the lens of what matters most to Medford residents today. The plan themes provide a way to envision steps to ensure Medford is a place that nurtures and supports:


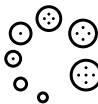



- Open and Engaged Communication,
- Welcoming and Supportive Neighborhoods,
- Vibrant Places,
- Climate Resilience, and
- Access for All.

MA General Law Plan Areas

-  LAND USE
-  HOUSING
-  ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
-  HISTORY, ARTS, & CULTURE
-  OPEN SPACE & RECREATION
-  PUBLIC SERVICES
-  MOBILITY



Community-Driven Themes

-  A WELCOMING & SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY
-  VIBRANT PLACES
-  ACCESS FOR ALL
-  CLIMATE RESILIENCE
-  OPEN & ENGAGED COMMUNICATION

CITY-WIDE VISION

The plan and all of its recommendations are in support of a vision that by 2050:

*“Medford’s many **welcoming communities** thrive among **vibrant places** that enhance the daily lives of all who work, play, learn and grow in our city. Together, we share a future that is **protected from extreme heat and flooding**, connects people to where they need to go, and promotes **open, engaged communication.**”*

FUTURE LAND USE

Medford's land use patterns today tie back to its history and foundation, reflect its rich natural resources, and are shaped by both natural and man-made infrastructure. By 1892, much of today's neighborhood patterns were in place, and land use of recent years follows this long-standing logic. When I-93 was constructed through the city, it had the biggest, notable recent impact, not only on mobility, but also on development patterns and relied on straightening the Mystic River to make its path possible.

Future land use planning for Medford acknowledges and responds to both past and recent history as well as future

potential, tying transportation improvements to increased nearby density, creating more space for quality local jobs, considering environmentally sensitive and vulnerable areas, and seeking to reinforce walkable neighborhoods with small scale retail, restaurants and services.

The future land use vision imagines a livable Medford with a wide range of centers and squares for gathering, protected and connected green-blue spaces, and a wider range of housing choices. This includes the following types of spaces:

- Civic and Institutional Anchors**
- Centers and Squares**
- Gateway Nodes**
- Neighborhood Centers**
- Residential Neighborhoods**
- Corridors**
- Green Corridors**
- Transformational Focus Areas**

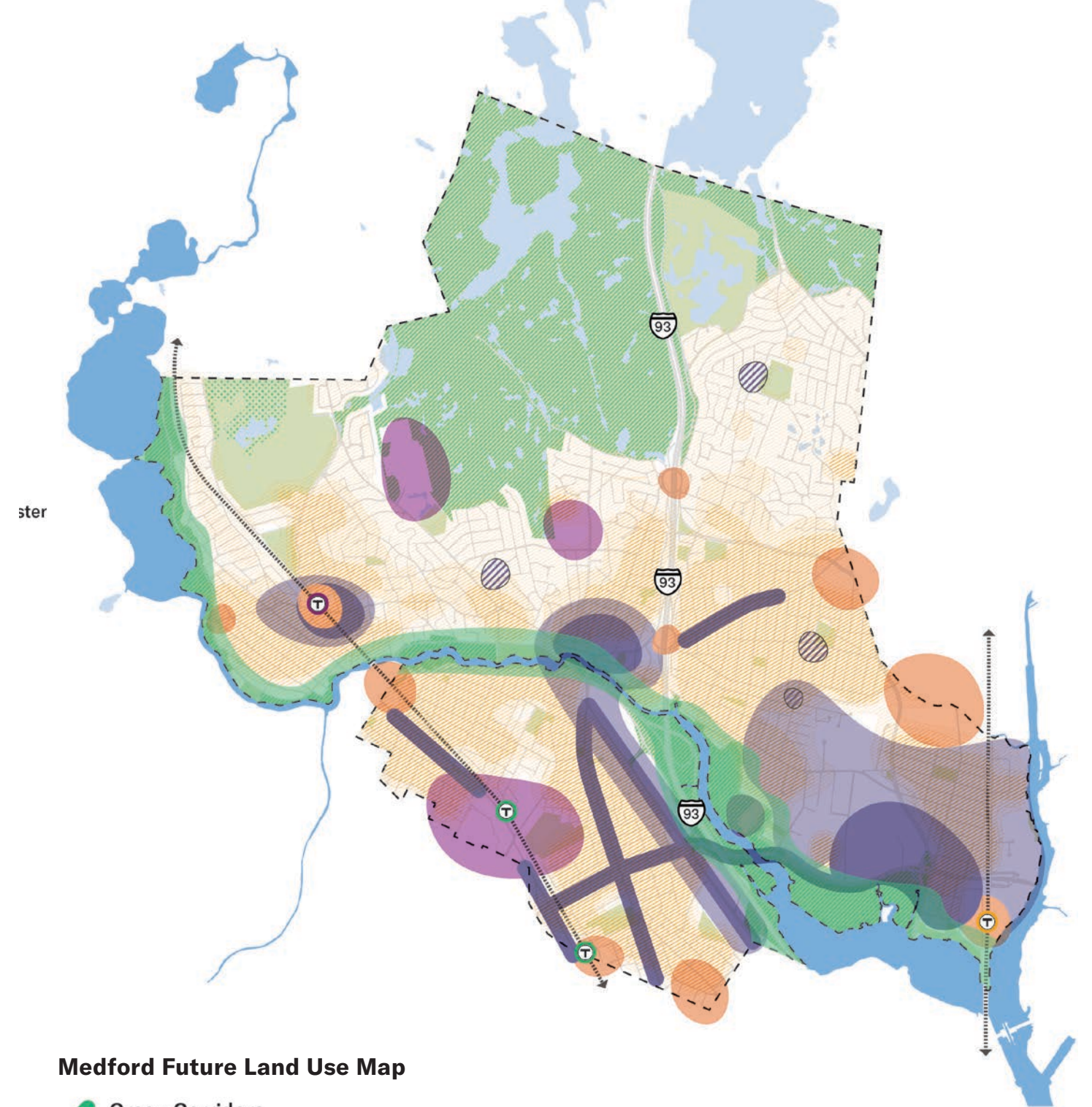


Figure XI. Medford Future Land Use Map

FUTURE LAND USE



Civic and Institutional Anchors

Tufts University, Medford High School, City Hall, and Lawrence Memorial Hospital are the primary institutional anchors in the City today. Each has potential for change in the future. Tufts could have greater connectivity to surrounding neighborhoods and opportunity related to the Green-Line extension; City Hall's location within an evolving Medford Square has potential for greater mixed use/residential development. Other anchors, like the High School and hospital, have an opportunity to increase connections to their everyday users.



Neighborhood Centers

These smaller scale centers, or potential areas for small scale retail, are critical opportunities to ensure that local retail and services can be reached in close proximity to more residential areas.



Residential Neighborhoods

Medford's residential neighborhoods are the heart of the city, and the future land use plan reinforces their character while proposing a greater range of housing types and options across the full spectrum of neighborhoods. This includes preserving some lower density areas and enabling increases in density in other areas, building on increased transit access in South Medford from the Green Line extension, future mixed use job centers, and commercial cores.



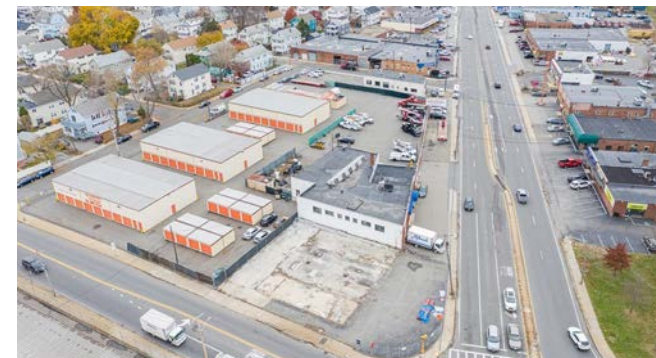
Centers and Squares

The land use plan identifies existing medium and large commercial centers (such as Medford Square, West Medford and Mystic Valley Parkway near Wellington) to reinforce, grow, or stabilize through greater density, mix of uses, and mobility connections.



Gateway Nodes

Gateways to Medford include both city boundary edges along key streets, as well as existing and new transit hubs, where residents or visitors frequently pass in and out of the city. These are important places to establish Medford's identity and use development, landmarks or open spaces to announce a welcome to the city.



Corridors

Corridors are key streets, often with a presence of commercial or industrial uses today, that connect important centers across Medford. These corridors, such as Salem Street, Mystic Avenue, Mystic Valley Parkway, Main Street, or Boston Avenue, are imagined to be places for greater mixed use, job opportunities, retail/services, and zoning that reinforces these goals.



Green Corridors

In addition to Medford's destination natural spaces and many neighborhood parks, the Mystic River and Malden River form two linear natural corridors carving through the center and eastern edge of the city. While not fully realized today, the future land use plan envisions Medford's rivers as the backbone of green, recreational and resilient corridors.

FUTURE CONNECTIONS

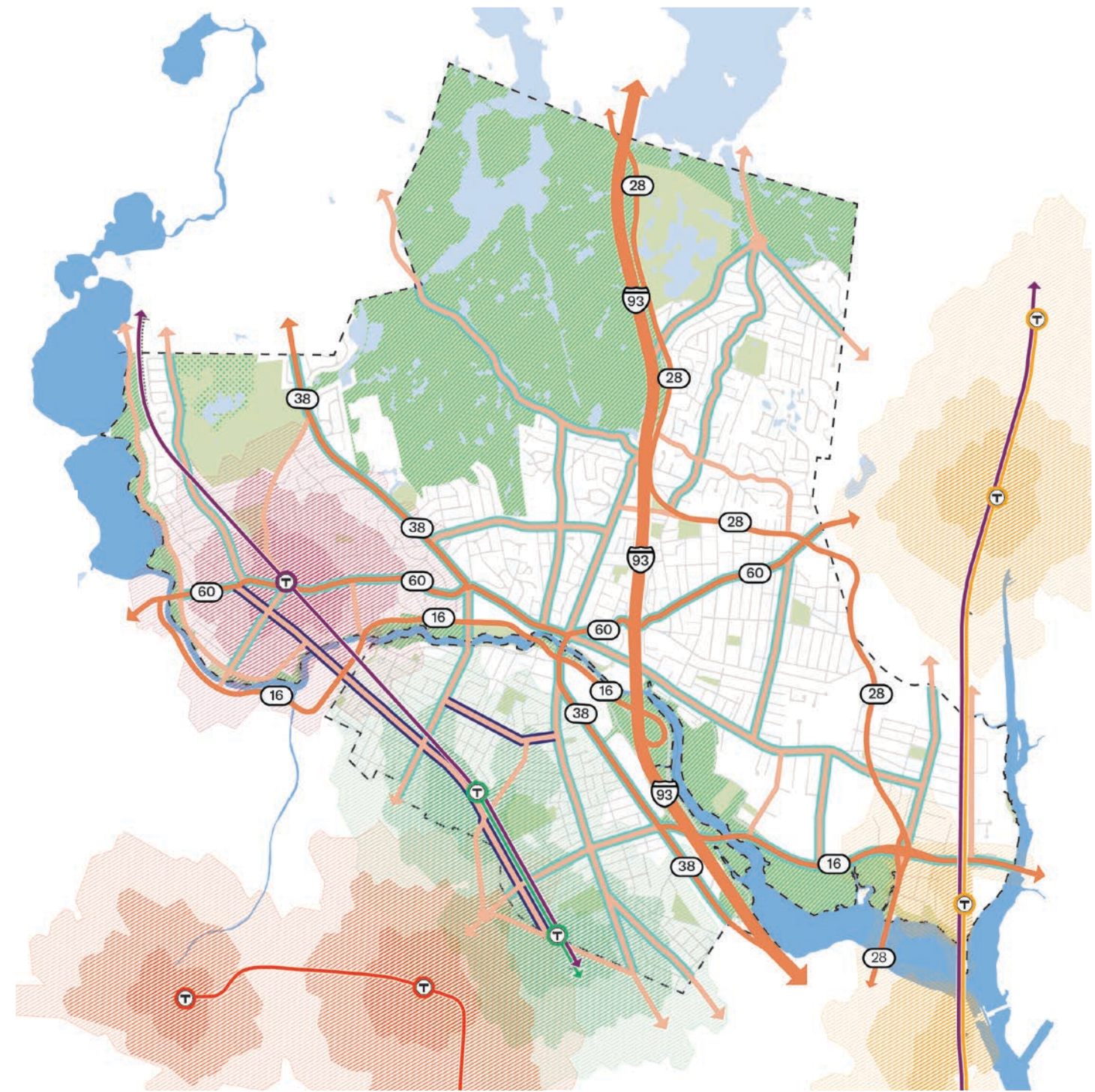
With the new Green Line extension and aspirations for a built out Complete Streets network, Medford's future transportation strategy envisions equitable, multimodal access across the city for all members of the community. Key aspects of the connectivity plan include:

- Leverage the existing Orange Line and commuter rail with future Green Line MBTA service together with appropriately scaled density and new job opportunities.
- Explore mobility improvements in Medford Square, including a potential bus hub and parking garage.
- Realize the Complete Streets network, prioritizing equity and east-west connections.
- Continue expanding universal design and access at all sites, from playgrounds and parks to transit stations.

"We need maintained sidewalks that don't turn ankles and pothole-free streets!"
Public Meeting No. 2

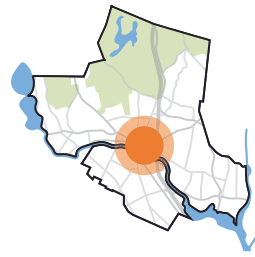
"We need to consider lighting, shade, and the safety of children as they travel through the city."
Steering Committee No. 4

"Curbside management of service vehicles and deliveries is important for bikers and walking."
Steering Committee No. 4



Medford Future Connections Map

- Interstate Highway
- State Road
- Planned Complete Streets
- Constructed Complete Streets
- MBTA Train Stop
- 1/4 Mile Walkshed From Station
- 1/2 Mile Walkshed From Station
- 3/4 Mile Walkshed From Station



MEDFORD SQUARE

Many plans and studies have already been conducted to reimagine and improve the function of Medford Square. The Comprehensive Plan's actions integrate and build on these earlier recommendations. Today, key challenges include conflicts among buses, trucks, cars, cyclists, and pedestrians; a lack of connections to the

riverfront, and some prominent surface parking lots. By implementing past recommendations and aligning with the citywide vision, Medford Square can explore mobility improvements including a bus hub and parking garage, improved river access, and increased mixed use development, including more residential space.

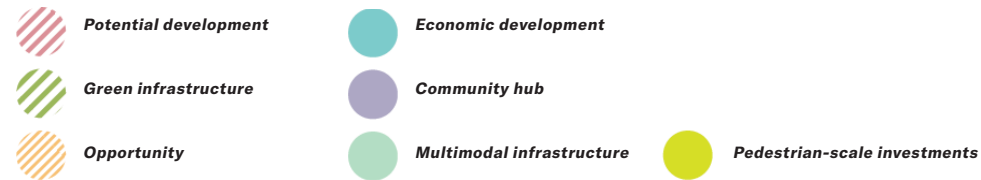
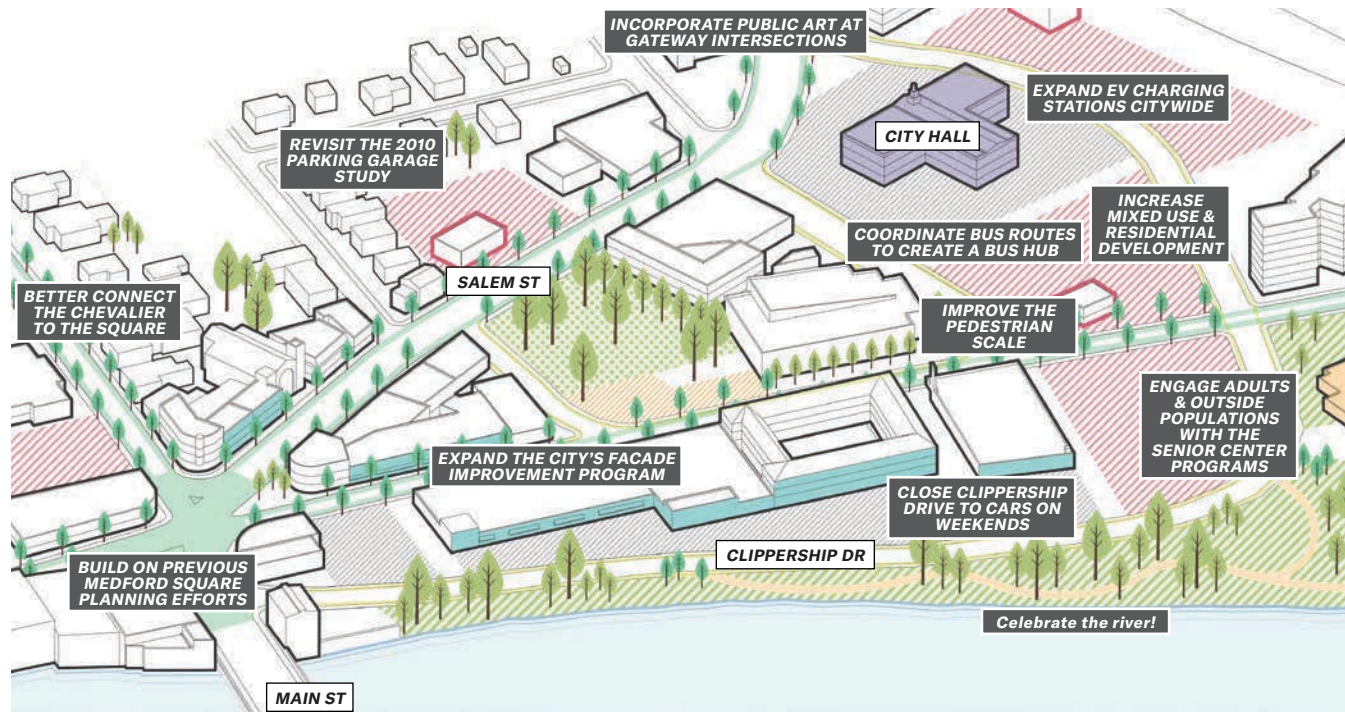
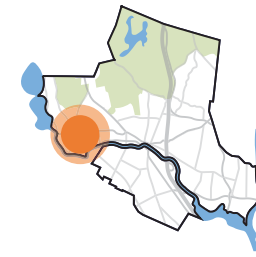


Figure XII. Example plan actions in Medford Square highlight activating central landmarks for economic development to create a vibrant and exciting place.



WEST MEDFORD SQUARE

West Medford Square today is a beloved neighborhood center and gateway to the community with character-giving historic buildings, transit access, and walkable access to residential areas. At the same time, we also heard of buildings that are vacant or in need of repair, traffic congestion, a lack of bike lanes, and an inaccessible MBTA station.

Through the Comprehensive Plan vision, this important center can be enhanced by implementing the 2016 Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, creating storefront guidelines, investing in adaptive reuse and building improvements to historic structures, and sensitive new development from mixed use to accessory dwelling units.

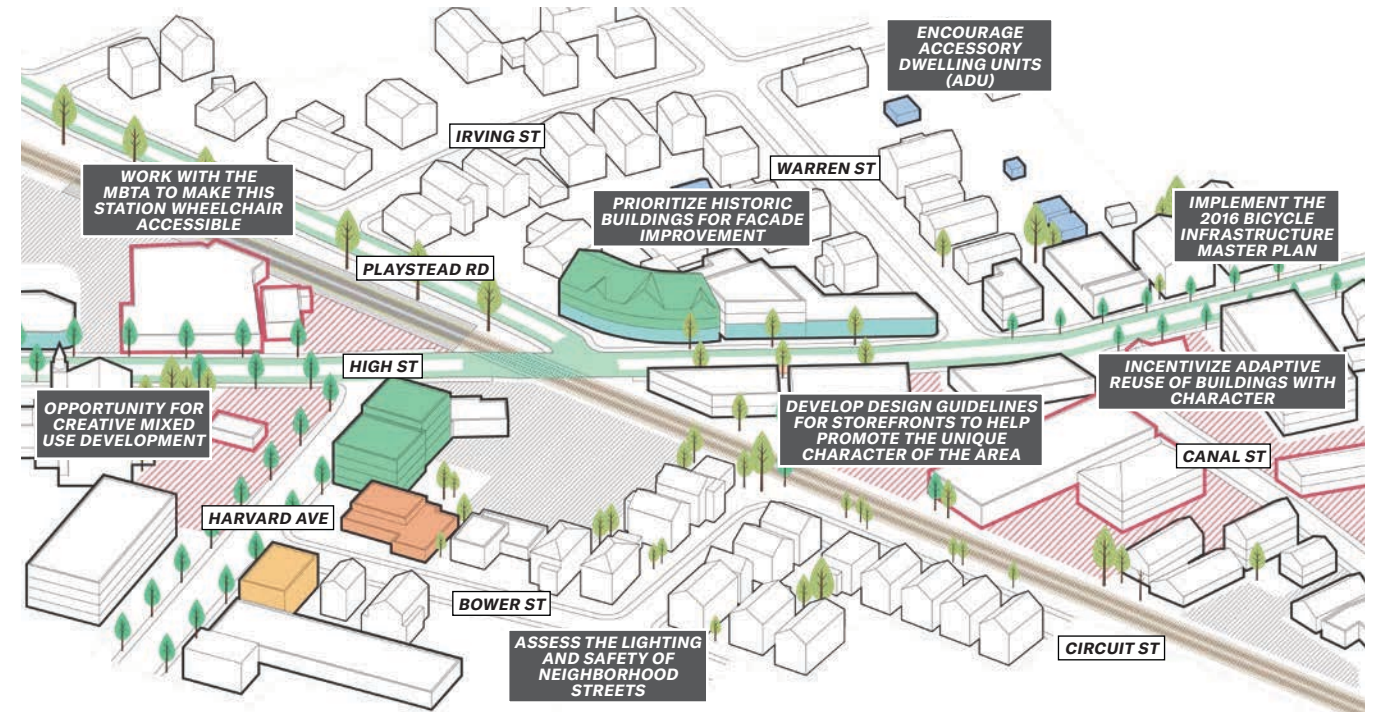
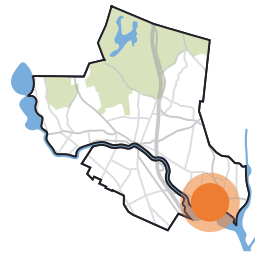


Figure XIII. In West Medford Square, increased housing stock and transit revitalize a historic neighborhood for mixed-use development.





MYSTIC VALLEY PARKWAY

This area of Mystic Valley Parkway is an area with great potential for change in the future. Through community conversations, there was frequent consensus that the area needs transportation and traffic-related improvements to make Mystic Valley Parkway safer for crossing and less of a high-speed pass-through. At the same time, there was agreement that, with those improvements, this area would be the right

place for higher density development, more employment and mixed use opportunities, and community amenities. The ideas from the citywide plan can be realized by bringing environmental goals and arts/culture opportunities together into the discussion with development and mobility priorities. A study to take a closer look at this area is a first step coming out of the plan.

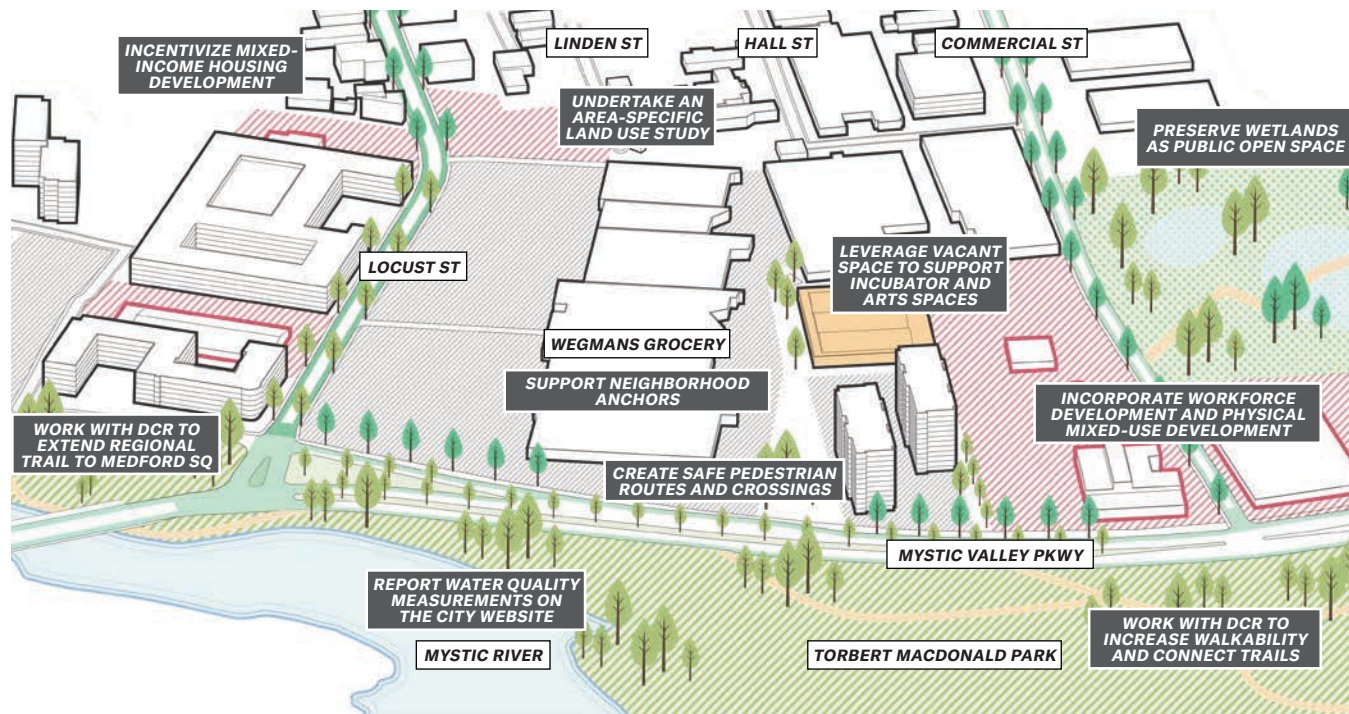
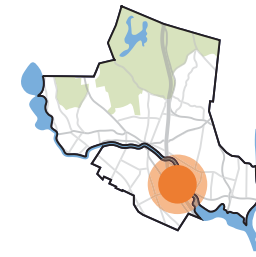


Figure XIV. Mystic Valley Parkway shifts from a car-centric corridor to a lively riverfront destination by preserving open space for recreation, installing public art, and strategic neighborhood development.



MYSTIC AVE CORRIDOR

Throughout the planning process, Mystic Avenue was one of the most frequently discussed areas for change. The current low density development with large surface parking, lack of tree canopy, connected sidewalks, or bus amenities; and riverfront invasive species threaten the health and experience of this area today. With proximity to Medford Square and a new Green Line extension station, this area needs improvements for connectivity,

environmental health, and flexible future development. Implementation of the 2016 Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, the Complete Streets, and Intersection Plan will create improvements along the road itself that allow more types of travel to co-exist. New allowable uses will lend more possibilities for future development, alongside environmental standards to manage stormwater, invasives, and create shade.

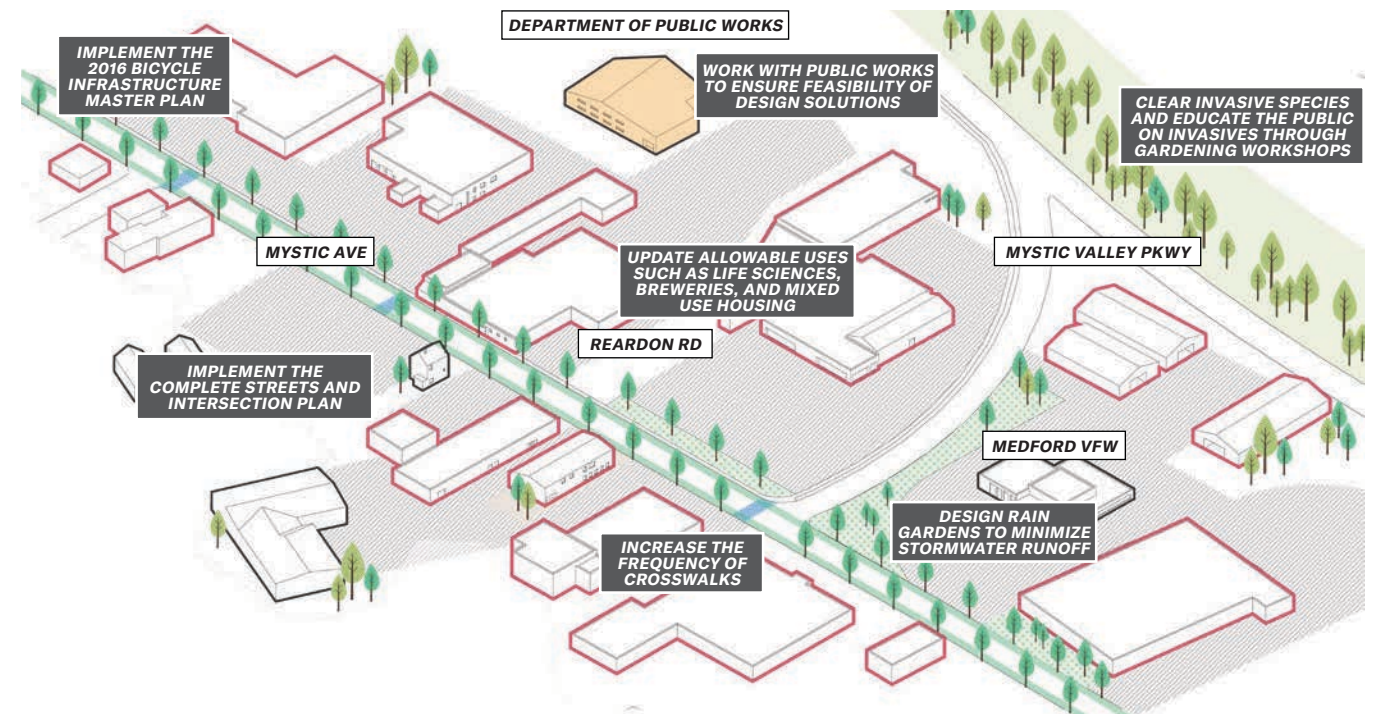


Figure XV. Mystic Avenue Corridor is a low density area with a lot of paving. Multi-modal access, stormwater infiltration, and increased shade make the corridor more comfortable in anticipation of its connection to the Green Line Extension



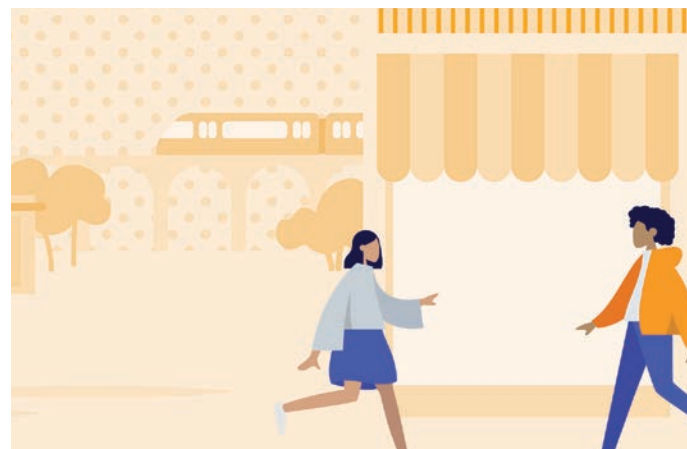
Open & Engaged Communication



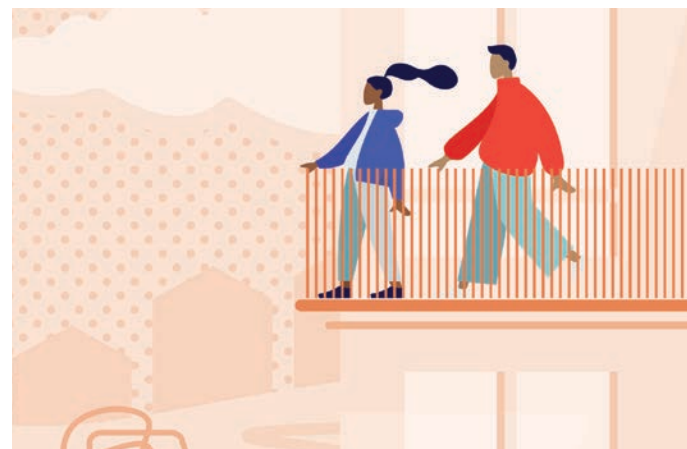
Climate Resilience



Access for All



Vibrant Places

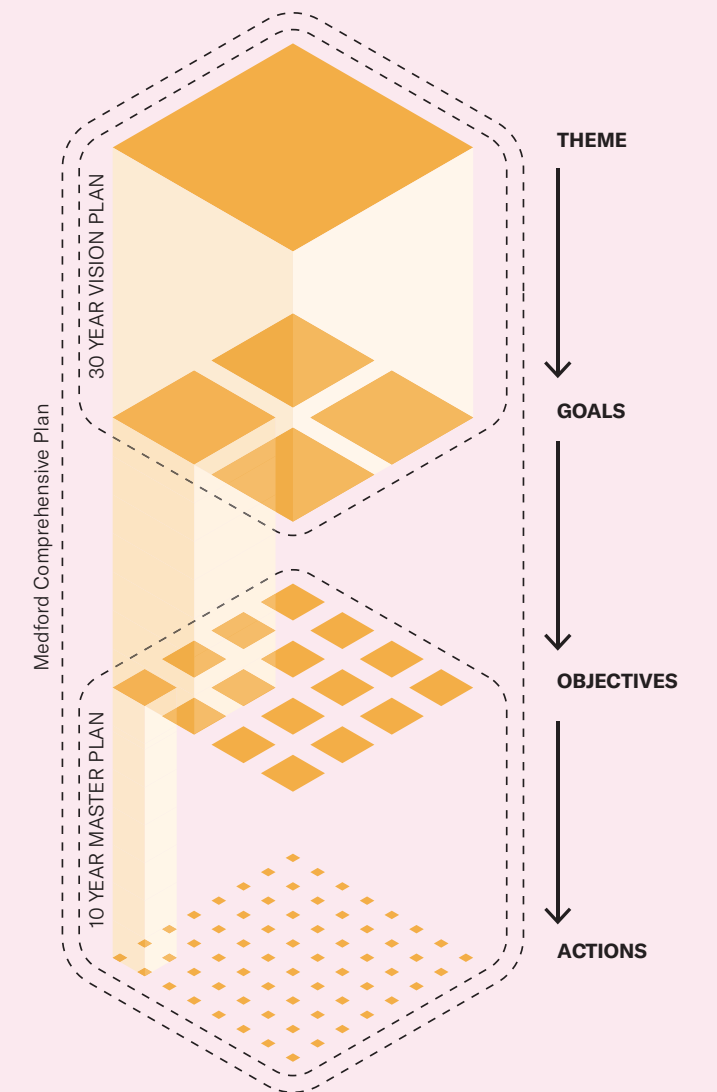


Welcoming & Supportive Neighborhoods

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN THEMES

The following five chapters, organized by the community-developed themes, describe the plan's goals and objectives, and the action steps required to accomplish them.

Each chapter begins with a set of benchmarks. Benchmarks are a point of reference against which the plan's progress over time can be compared or assessed to make sure Medford's evolution is moving in the community's desired direction. Tracking these benchmarks will give the City an understanding of how small actions add up to tangible change in the community. The final chapter concludes with a table to organize implementation steps, recommending important plan champions, internal and external partners, first steps, and potential non-city funding sources.



OPEN & ENGAGED COMMUNICATION

Central to the themes expressed in the plan engagement process are core values of equity, democracy, and transparency. This plan provides recommendations to effectively engage with residents and center their voice in the decision-making process, particularly for those from marginalized and historically underrepresented groups. On a foundational level, Medford will institute new initiatives to build trusting relationships with residents and maintain these relationships.

Throughout the course of the plan engagement process, residents emphasized the need for accessible resources, such as an updated website and social media, to keep them informed on plans and projects. This comprehensive plan will be updated annually to provide residents with consistent information on plan progress and implementation. The City will continue to analyze community outreach through equitable engagement metrics. These metrics

will help show which groups are participating in civic processes, and address any gaps in engagement and outreach efforts.

To complement outreach efforts, the City will streamline internal processes as well, through the creation of a central data repository for cross-departmental collaboration, and clear and transparent roles and responsibilities to make city staff more accessible to residents. The City of Medford allows residents to participate in city government through their numerous City Boards & Commissions, some of which provide stipends for participation. The City seeks to refine these processes by instituting best practices for resident involvement and compensation. By respecting community agency, experience, and expertise, and allocating the proper resources to facilitate open engagement, the City will continue to reinforce and strengthen ties with residents.



OPEN & ENGAGED COMMUNICATION BENCHMARKS



GOALS

BUILD & MAINTAIN TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY	39
IMPLEMENT THE PLAN ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED PRIORITIES	47
ALLOCATE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY	51



Figure 1 Equitable, accessible, and open engagement between the City and residents will ensure that community needs are prioritized and addressed.

BUILD & MAINTAIN TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

OE.1.1 ENSURE THE COMMUNITY SEES TANGIBLE RESULTS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN PLANNING PROCESSES

A key component of public engagement during the planning process for this Comprehensive Plan has been communication between the City and the community. This objective is a critical component of continuing the outreach and engagement that was reinforced by this planning process. For the implementation of this plan to be successful, the City must also

promote a community dialogue about what has been accomplished, what is in progress, and what has not yet been started. These two actions will provide feedback on progress that will contribute to that dialogue.

“I remember a vibrant downtown with lots of retail and busy supermarkets, it’s not the same anymore”
Public Workshop No. 1



Figure 2 Open communication on implementation and progress keeps the community informed and actively engaged.

OE.1.1.1

Issue an annual Comprehensive Plan update.

The City should create a dedicated web page for the comprehensive plan that contains the final plan and a dashboard to measure progress toward implementation. The dashboard could be as simple as a list of actions with a scorecard with columns for complete, in progress, stalled, and not yet started. The dashboard could be more complex, with progress toward set metrics that the City has identified as useful for

measuring the progress of specific actions. Although the format of the dashboard is flexible, the City should update the dashboard on a regular basis, no less than once a year, to ensure that the community has current information about progress. Over time, the City could implement a dashboard (see 1.2.1) that provides information on a quarterly basis.

OE.1.1.2

Create a Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee.

Implementation of the comprehensive plan requires the efforts of City staff and officials, and partners outside City government. A Comprehensive Plan Implementation Committee (CPIC) can fulfill the following important roles:

- Review the implementation plan on a regular basis, updating the actions as noted above. This task would include issuing the update described in the action above.
- Work with City staff and officials to set appropriate metrics for measuring progress. This task would include defining the data sources and requesting periodic updates to ensure that the data was collected.
- Check with City staff and officials on the status of stalled actions to see what conditions are blocking implementation. This task could include facilitating conversations among partners responsible for the action or actions that are stalled.
- Review actions that have been started to check for priority and relevance as conditions change.
- Report to the Mayor and City Council at least twice a year on the status of implementation.

Note that the CPIC is not responsible for completing the actions; rather, it is the body that measures progress and addresses accountability. Often municipal staff and officials have more immediate concerns related to the day-to-day operations of the City. A committee that can focus on the long-term implementation

is invaluable in ensuring that actions are completed in a timely manner. Members should be a combination of officials and residents and can be staffed by the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability. Critical liaisons include the Mayor, City Council, and Community Development Board, or their designees.

“When I moved here everyone was so welcoming and friendly, I’m happy to report this is still true 10 years later!”
Public Workshop No. 1

BUILD & MAINTAIN TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

OE.1.2 MAKE PARTICIPATION IN CIVIC LIFE CLEAR & ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

Medford is celebrated as a diverse city made up of residents from many different places and cultures. The city's diversity is reflected not only in its wide array of retail establishments and cultural festivals, but also in the makeup of its resident population. According to 2016 - 2020 estimates from the US Census, 29.6% of households in Medford speak a language other than English at home. Medford also has a larger population of residents over the age of 65, and 10% of the resident population lacks access to broadband internet. Engagement between the City and its diverse residents needs to be

accessible to all by removing language barriers and digital access challenges and working to identify how residents who are not accessing city information can more easily receive updates about how they can participate in the City's civic goals. The following actions identify methods the City should use to enhance engagement with residents, businesses, and visitors and better incorporate different perspectives in civic decision making.

"Medford needs a more functional website so we can know what's going on around the city and in the government"
Public Workshop No. 2



Figure 3 Accessible participation will allow more people of varied backgrounds and experiences to contribute to civic life.

OE.1.2.1

Update digital communication platforms and ensure consistent communication across all platforms, including the City's website, social media, and e-newsletter.

The newsletter is the most regular form of communication from the City. Social media and the City's website should be updated with the same content as frequently as the City's newsletter to ensure digital outreach is consistent across platforms.

Design of the website will include translated material throughout, and will be reorganized to support ease of use by residents and small businesses with limited digital experience.

OE.1.2.2

Document and share the process for joining and responsibilities for each Board, Commission or Committee.

To encourage diverse participation in civic citizen advisory and decision making bodies, the City should create one easily accessible location to find out more about the roles and responsibilities of members of civic groups and provide a universal application for all committee engagement.

This committee "101" can include details about stipends, committee roles, expectations for involvement, and any desired or required experience for each committee. The City could also work to provide annual training for Board/Committee members to overcome the barrier that one needs to be an "expert" to participate.

"We should be doing all that we can to get more citizens involved in civic life and promote a diversity of perspectives and experiences"
Public Workshop No.1

Figure 4 Documents describing the roles and responsibilities for various Board, Commission, and Committee positions helps to attract more diverse applicants to serve and participate at the municipal level.



BUILD & MAINTAIN TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

OE.1.3 CONTINUOUSLY ENGAGE COMMUNITY GROUPS, PARTNERS, & TRADITIONALLY UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS IN PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Commitment to the Medford community means focusing investment where the need is the highest. This is achieved through frequent conversations internally, between city

departments and other public agencies, and externally, between the City and community partners.



Figure 5 *Recurring community events, such as farmers markets and arts events like Medford Open Studios, present ample opportunities to engage residents, particularly those from underrepresented groups.*

OE.1.3.1

Develop engagement guidelines.

The comprehensive plan surfaced many ways to engage with Medford residents during the COVID pandemic. Those lessons learned from the comprehensive plan and other recent planning efforts in the city should be culled into an approach to future engagement as the comprehensive plan is

deployed. Engagement guidelines should be a working document that is structured around goals (what is the project/policy the City wants to implement) and articulate the audiences and tools to support outreach and conversations with each audience.

- Offer communication training to residents and staff, including mediation training.
- Track participation demographics in planning processes and Boards and focus on recruitment and engagement of those who are not yet “in the room.”
- Coordinate with other City Departments, such as Medford’s Office of Outreach and Prevention, and community groups to reach a wide range of individuals.
- Provide resources and funding to support community participation such as stipends, food, and childcare.
- Meet people where they are by expanding meetings and engagement opportunities beyond the walls of City Hall.

Comprehensive Community Engagement: Raleigh, North Carolina

In 2021, the Mayor of Raleigh proposed the creation of an Office of Community Engagement to address city-community relationships post-COVID and in the midst of continued civil rights unrest. Working with Mickey Fearn, out of North Carolina State University, the Mayor proposed a central office for engagement that would guide strategic direction of the office, set priorities for outreach, and benchmark progress in outreach efforts. The Community Engagement Office would

also include a “neighborhood enrichment unit”, which would be tasked with designing, implementing and evaluating specific programs, conversations, and activities. This unit would be in direct contact with community members and neighborhood groups. While this office is meant to ensure community engagement is comprehensive and consistent, the office also provides technical assistance to other city departments as projects arise.



Figure 6 *Raleigh, North Carolina has instituted an Office of Community Engagement for the express purpose of outreach and communications with local communities.*

BUILD & MAINTAIN TRUST WITH THE COMMUNITY

OE.1.3.2 Offer communication training to residents and staff, including mediation training

In order to continuously engage with the diverse communities that make up the City, both the City's staff and residents need to be prepared for differences in perspective and views to arise regarding city decisions and resident needs. Effective

communication training with parties before challenging conversations arise and as needed when projects will have a significant impact on a neighborhood or community, will support a healthy discourse between the City and its constituents.

OE.1.3.3 Track participation demographics in planning processes and Boards and focus on recruitment and engagement of those who are not yet "in the room."

The City should use regular updates to federal demographic data reports like the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Decennial Census, to ensure participation in planning processes and committees reflect the City's demographic diversity,

at a minimum. If projects or processes are focused on impacts to particular neighborhoods or groups of people, care should be given to better reflect the local demographics of that community.

OE.1.3.4 Coordinate with other City Departments, such as Medford's Office of Outreach and Prevention, and community groups to reach a wide range of individuals.

The city should coordinate with public-facing City Departments to identify specific strategies for connecting with different groups of Medford residents that "meets them where they are". This could include sharing short slide decks, pamphlets, flyers, or other project summary materials with City Departments and community groups to share in their own meetings and communications with their constituents.

Working with Medford's Office of Outreach and Prevention and the City's ADA Compliance Office will ensure that the Comprehensive Plan's implementation efforts work in conjunction with the City's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts to support BIPOC, LGBTQ+, persons with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities. Lastly, the city should enhance translation and interpretation efforts across City communications, including the newsletter and website.

OE.1.3.5 Provide resources and funding to support community participation such as stipends, food, and childcare.

"Medford should make meetings more welcoming by providing training, translation, and other means of support"
Steering Committee Meeting No. 4

Families and low-income residents are often the least engaged in planning processes and City-led project conversations. Reducing a few of the barriers that keep people from participating in City projects by providing consistent and free childcare, food and

refreshments in citywide in-person public workshops and meetings will provide a welcoming environment for residents to meaningfully engage.

The City should also consider providing stipends or gift cards to community members who participate in ad-hoc committees or focus group conversations.

OE.1.3.6 Meet people where they are by expanding meetings and engagement opportunities beyond the walls of City Hall.

Especially during the summer months, the City is bustling with markets, family events, and other free, public activities. The City already tables in many of these events, and can expand engagement with communities in these events by connecting ongoing

City projects or plans to events happening around town to raise awareness and gather feedback from people who may not otherwise choose to engage in the project process.

Mobile Engagement: Detroit, Michigan

As part of a neighborhood planning process for Campau/Bangaltown, the City of Detroit worked with Interboro Partners to develop a variety of tools that encourage resident participation in ways that are fun, quick, and meaningful for both the city and the participant. All of the tools deployed broke out of the walls of City owned buildings

and focused on engagement at places people frequent, like outside of grocery stores, in festivals and farmers markets, as a printed newsletter to share updates on plan developments and implementation and a repurposed ice cream truck that solicits community input and provides free ice cream for participation.

OE.1.3.7 Maintain a community contacts database.

The City's email newsletter already has a robust following - and shares City-wide information to a broad audience. The City should expand this database through active outreach to new residents and businesses,

and could encourage engagement in the newsletter by many different age groups to connect people of all ages to their roles in plan's implementation.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED PRIORITIES

OE.2.1 CREATE SYSTEMS FOR DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING

“Metrics” is used to indicate a method of measuring something. For a comprehensive plan, metrics are quantifiable measurements used to track progress in the implementation of the plan. For example, one metric could be the number of linear feet of new sidewalk installed in the City. The city would set a goal to have a certain number of feet installed within a specific period of time, and then measure the progress against that goal on a regular schedule by collecting information from the Department of Public Works and MassDOT and comparing the totals against the set goal.

Establishing targets is important as it helps increase transparency between City and the community during communications about the successful completion of specific actions identified in this plan.

Some actions will not have metrics, for example, an action related to a zoning change is complete once the City Council has approved the change for inclusion in the City’s Zoning Ordinance.

*“Medford doesn’t have the technology infrastructure or the staff capacity to meet the needs of a modern city”
Public Workshop No. 1*

OE.2.1.1

Develop a central repository of data for Departments to promote cross-department use of information.

After the City has identified the metrics and associated data, the next step is to collect the data in a central area for easy access by all partners in implementing this comprehensive plan. A public-facing repository would be ideal and contribute to the goal of open and engaged communication. An online dashboard would

be ideal for this purpose. Depending on the platform, such a dashboard could be built by staff or interns in the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability. Each department would provide the information relevant to its associated goals and metrics.

OE.2.1.2

Develop a list of data to measure implementation progress.

Staff from the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability should work with other city staff to determine appropriate metrics for the actions listed in this comprehensive plan. Each metric should be specific to one or more actions and the department involved should be able to collect the data as part of its regular duties;

the intent is not to create burdensome requirements for city staff. The City may choose to incorporate third-party metrics to help guide the process of developing its own. Examples include AARP’s Livability Index, WalkScore, ParkScore, and other options.

Innovating with Data: Cambridge, Massachusetts

Cambridge, Massachusetts has been tracking local data for several decades. In an effort to understand local impacts of climate change and find local ways to combat climate change, the City has benchmarked emissions, energy use, and waste streams and connected data collection to public outreach campaigns in support of more climate friendly activities. As an example, the Public Works Department used recycling data to launch a campaign focused on

reducing recycling contamination (the inclusion of non-recyclable materials such as electronics, plastic bags, etc) to make their recycling program more robust and to save money. In 2021 the City received the What Works Cities Gold Certification for this work. The certification evaluates how well cities are managed by measuring the extent to which city leaders incorporate data and evidence in their decision-making.

IMPLEMENT THE PLAN ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY-SUPPORTED PRIORITIES

OE.2.2 IDENTIFY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Although a comprehensive plan is a document that guides City actions, some of the recommendations in this plan require non-municipal partners. Ways in which partners can be helpful include providing insight into

community conversations and preferences, providing specific expertise on topics identified within this plan, and taking direct action to assist the City with completing these recommendations.



Figure 7 The City of Medford should identify partners in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to help carry out plan actions.

OE.2.2.1

Identify institutions, nonprofits, and property owners who can help implement the recommendations of this plan.

Many of these actions could include partnerships with non-municipal institutions, organizations, agencies, and businesses. The City (either the Mayor's Office or the Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability) should create a list of potential local, regional, and

state partners who could assist with specific actions. The list should include a person that could act as a liaison between the City and the organization. This list should be reviewed annually for changes to the designated contact or organization.

OE.2.2.2

Develop outreach programs for identified partners, create a regular schedule of contacts, and clarify who is responsible for relationships.

Once the City has compiled the names on the list, staff should develop an outreach program that assigns responsibility for regular contact to the appropriate staff member. This program should include a schedule for regular outreach – perhaps quarterly – to ensure that the lines of communication are open to the organization.

Outreach does not need to be on an individual basis. For example, the City could hold a quarterly meeting of arts organizations with a connection to Medford.

The City has two roles: the first is to establish the basis for partnerships between the City and these organizations on the relevant actions in this plan. The second is to act as an initial facilitator among complementary organizations to encourage connections based on mutual interests. This creates a network of organizations that can, in addition to their individual missions, provide added support for actions that benefit the entire group. In some cases, the City may find that some actions identified in this plan may be better accomplished by coordinating existing resources in the community.

“Medford has so many great organizations that could be partners in helping the city reach its goals the city should maintain relationships with youth and health organizations”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 3

ALLOCATE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

OE.3.1 INCORPORATE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THIS PLAN INTO THE CITY'S BUDGET

The City's budget is an important tool for implementation. The city should align its budgetary priorities with the objectives of this comprehensive plan. Implementation of the

actions identified here will be easier when City departments structure their budgets to appropriately address these actions.

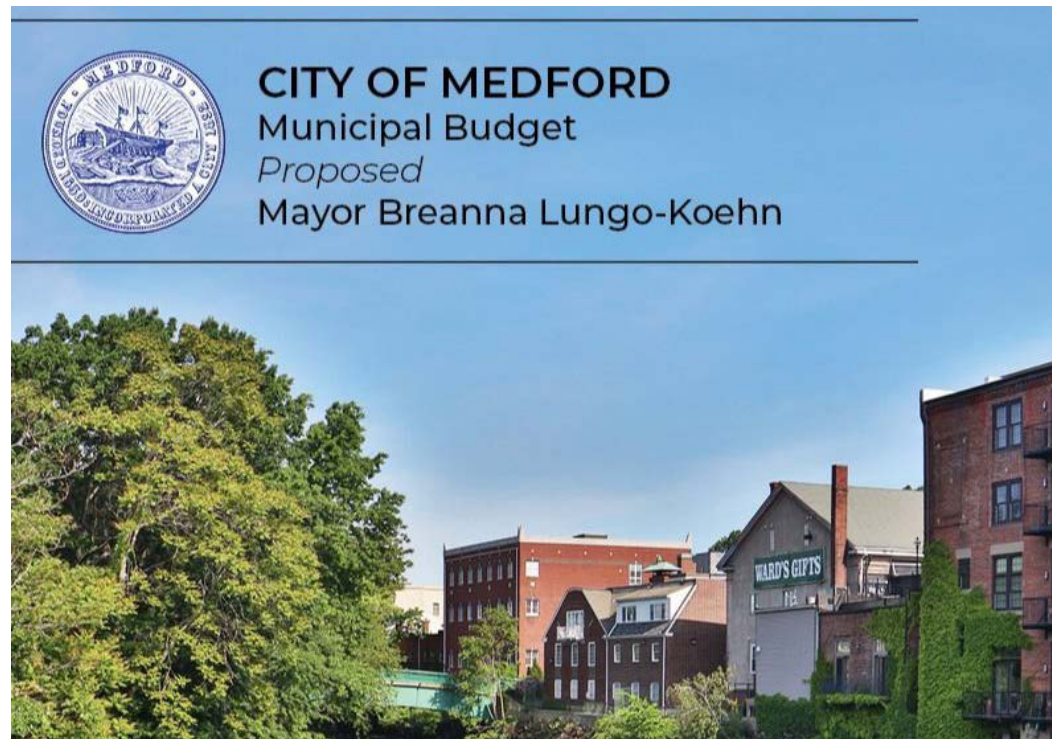


Figure 8 To manage implementation effectively, Medford should coordinate with city departments to identify budgetary needs for future actions.

OE.3.1.1

Require department heads to identify how their budgets will help implement the recommendations of this plan when requesting funding for new initiatives or capital needs.

A section should be added to the budget worksheet for department heads to provide a narrative that links budget requests to the goals of this plan. The narrative should identify the progress made on actions, any relevant actions that will be implemented in

the next fiscal year, and future actions with a timeline for completion. This information can support a budget request and provide data for the regular reports on plan progress recommended in 1.1.1 above.

OE.3.1.2

Require the use of data to show how new initiatives or capital requests make progress towards achieving the Plan.

This action is linked to the metrics developed under 1.2.1. Department heads should use the identified metrics to support their budget requests. For example, if the City develops a metric requiring a certain number of trees to be planted in the City within three years, the Department of Public Works could tie a line in their budget to the

planting of a third of those trees each year. An explicit link between measured goal and request allows the Mayor and the City Council to balance competing requests for limited resources by evaluating whether a request will successfully complete one or more actions within the plan.

Data Transparency: Kansas City, Missouri

Part of the Kansas City initiative to make information about planning and capital projects more accessible to the public, DataKC is a program that highlights data-driven decision-making in city operations and facilitates access to City data for the community. In 2018, Kansas City passed an ordinance that codifies its commitment to data-driven governance and ensures that the City's approach to transparency and accountability over the past decade is now

a requirement for all city decisions and projects moving forward. Using StoryMaps, the City shares an annual reporting of the city's datasets - including mapping of dangerous buildings, crime data, business license changes, and city expenditures by project and department. The Data KC portal has been viewed by over 178,000 unique visitors, and the site has experienced about 53,000 downloads.

CLIMATE RESILIENT

Medford faces a number of critical threats due to climate change, most notably rising temperatures, storm surge and the risk of flooding due to its location on the Mystic River watershed, and the increased number of extreme weather events. In order to face this global crisis at the local level, Medford must actively partner with other cities in the region. Increased annual rainfall means the region could experience 3 feet of sea level rise by 2070. Warmer weather means 30 days over 90 (Fahrenheit) degrees currently, compared to just 11 days in 1990, and temperatures 3.5 to 9 degrees warmer by 2070.

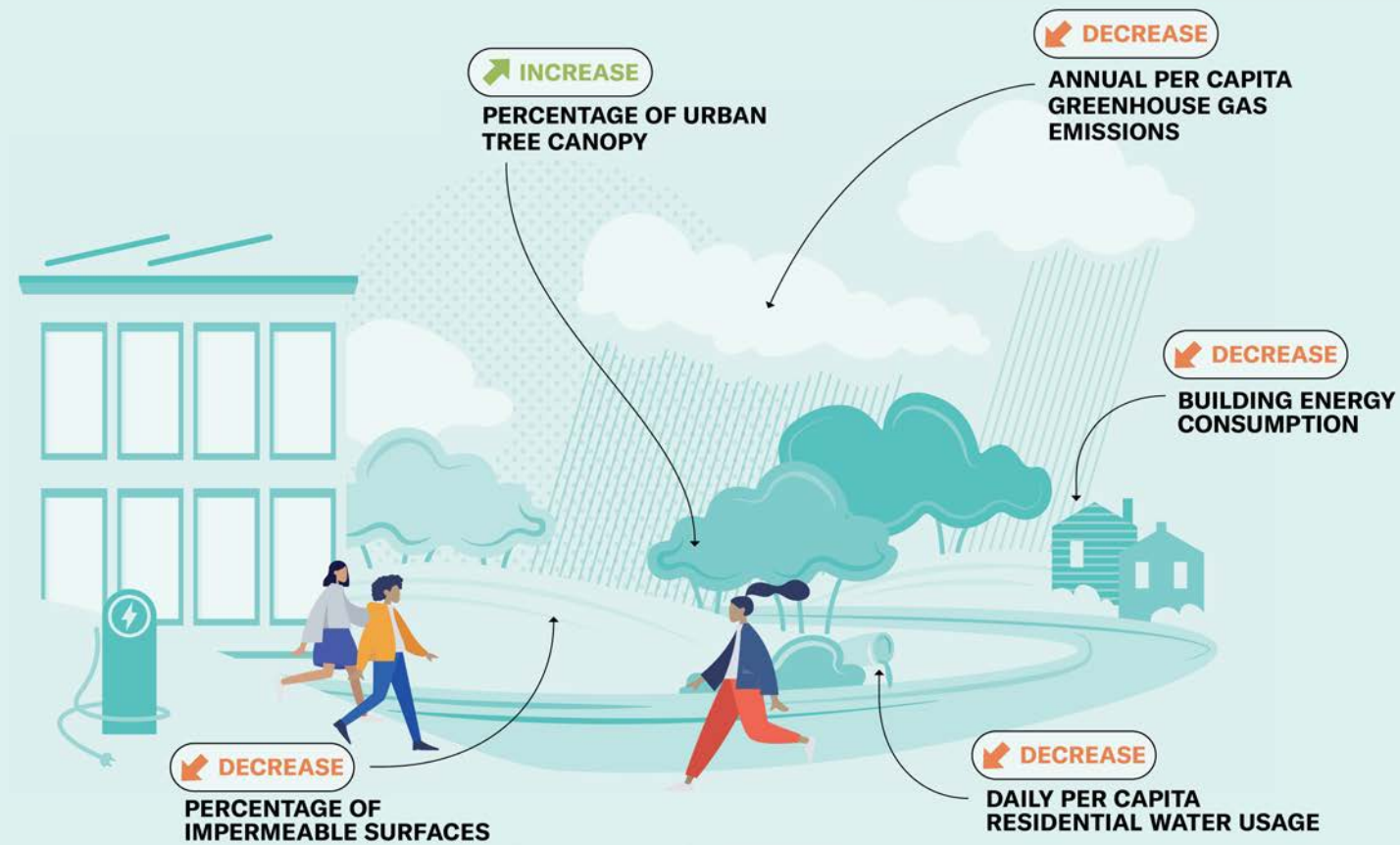
This plan proposes various actions: changes to the zoning code, climate benchmarks, ordinance changes, and a public awareness campaign, and continued implementation of previous action plans, such as the Resilience Hubs framework and the in-progress Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. The majority of Medford's emissions, about 70% come from its buildings,

both residential and commercial. The city should strive to achieve net zero emission status by 2050. Increased street trees help mitigate the impact of emissions and rapidly rising temperatures. Stormwater management that leverages physical infrastructure and natural resources will help make the city more resilient to flooding. Waste management is an urgent goal due to the state's recent waste bans, and is particularly needed for business districts. The City should leverage the plentiful open space to help mitigate urban heat island effect.

Public awareness campaigns will help convey the urgency of climate change. In Medford, many socially vulnerable residents are vulnerable to environmental inequities that are made worse by climate change, such as increased vulnerability to flooding, high temperatures, and food insecurity. Community health and wellbeing is a central aspect of the plan's approach to climate resilience.



CLIMATE RESILIENT BENCHMARKS



GOALS

RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS	58
ACHIEVE & EVOLVE THE 2022 CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN	64
PRESERVE & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES	72
SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH & RESILIENCE	80

Figure 1 Climate resilience initiatives will help Medford landscapes adapt and evolve while supporting overall community health.



RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

CR.1.1 PROVIDE CLEAR DEFINITIONS AND INFORMATION TO THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THREATS AND EXPECTED CHANGES.

Basement flooding and home water intrusion, road flooding, and heating and cooling bills have been increasing across Massachusetts, especially in waterfront cities like Medford and its neighbors. Residents and businesses are aware of these localized problems, and some are experiencing differing degrees of hardship from these challenges. Residents and businesses also understand that these challenges are more frequent, even within the last few years. However, awareness that these

impacts to homes, businesses, and commutes, are all a result of a changing climate. The Climate Action and Adaptation Plan as well as this plan need to constantly and clearly inform the public about climate change, including what can be done to alleviate or adapt to the effects of climate change and build community preparedness for the future.

*“Climate [is] a top issue in my opinion”
Public Workshop No. 1*



PUBLIC SERVICES

CR.1.1.1

Build staff capacity and resources within City Departments to ensure climate change related communications are clear, consistent, and can be translated to community members who are foreign-born or speak English as a second language.

Using the CAAP as a framework, the City could host internal sessions structured around each section of the report to communicate key terms, share plan recommendations, and build up an internal

knowledge base. The City could also consider opening these sessions up to outside groups, such as neighborhood groups, advocacy organizations, and the general public.

CR.1.1.2

Use ongoing City-led projects and policy changes to demonstrate climate change locally and express how the City is working to alleviate or adapt to increased threats.

Almost every city project, from neighborhood planning and new building construction to building retrofits and traffic feasibility projects on City streets are impacted by climate change. Every project also has the ability to reverse or slow the effects of climate change locally and globally. The City should acknowledge that every project it engages in is the result of a changing climate and celebrate its role in preparing the city for the future. Below are a few ways the City can communicate this relationship in its projects:

- Temporary signs at project sites that articulate the threat and the city’s response.
- Inclusion of climate impacts and actions to combat climate change in all project related presentations, press releases, and online communication internally and externally.
- Use of billboards and Soofa signs to share examples of successful projects around the city and metrics that communicate project impact.



Figure 2 Flooding is an acute threat to Medford given its proximity to the rivers, and climate change will only increase the risk of these weather events.

CR.1.1.3

Partner with the Health Department and the Department of Public Works on communications strategies.

Work with both organizations to share the CAAP and the comprehensive plan and confirm opportunities for both departments to communicate the role of climate change to the public, including methods shared in actions above. The Health Department will

be a vital partner in articulating climate change impacts on residents and can share metrics and benchmarks with Public Works for inclusion in project related and public facing materials.

Communication is Key, Medford Health Department

The Medford Climate and Adaptation Plan presents the opportunity for a number of public outreach and education campaigns to broaden public awareness and understanding of climate-related issues. The many campaigns listed in the CAAP would provide residents with information for contextualizing the importance of, and providing access to, climate mitigation strategies, such as access to solar energy and the promotion of zero waste strategies and recycling. Campaigns such as the proposed “Cool Medford” campaign help residents navigate rising temperatures, which pose a threat to physical health.

The Resilience Hubs framework, released in 2020, provides an evaluation of existing communication channels in Medford to assess the city’s operational capacity and ability to reach residents in emergency

situations, as well as residents’ level of social connectedness and ability to access vital resources and services. The main program assessed is the “R U OK?” program, which was utilized during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic to contact older Medford residents in particular. This data provided valuable information on which channels were most successful at reaching residents, and what barriers to communicating with and assisting vulnerable residents still need to be addressed. Additionally, the CAAP lists a “Resilient Communications Plan” as a milestone for completion in 2022, as spearheaded by the Office of Outreach and Prevention, and the first community resilience hubs to be launched in 2025. These locations would also serve as central points of communication to residents in the event of a climate emergency.



Figure 3 Cooling Shelters like this one in Springfield, MA, are part of a larger network of centers where residents could access air conditioning, water snacks, and restrooms across the city.

CR.1.1.4

Pull data from SeeClickFix, Google, and other crowdsourced databases to understand what issues the public cares about most that tie back to climate change.

In Medford, operations and maintenance requests for city infrastructure are made and managed through SeeClickFix, a digital platform to connect Medford residents to city services. While many requests through SeeClickFix are made regarding regular city roles, like trash pick-up, plowing, and traffic light outages, many requests can

include issues that are brought on by more frequent and more powerful storm events, irregular precipitation and wind patterns, and flooding. Understanding what topics come up more frequently on SeeClickFix can help guide the city towards priority communications with the public to reinforce their relationship to climate adaptation.



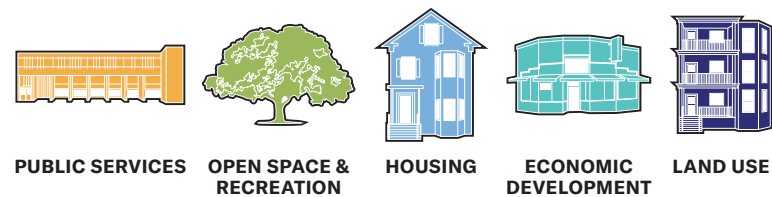
Figure 4 SeeClickFix tracks resident requests to understand patterns of deferred maintenance needs.

RAISE COMMUNITY AWARENESS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS

CR.1.2 WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO IMPLEMENT THE RESILIENCE HUBS RECOMMENDATIONS.

According to the CAAP, Resilience hubs are “neighborhood community spaces with a variety of programs and services that build relationships, promote preparedness, and support health and well-being. These programs are located within a resilient and sustainable building, often with features such as solar power, rainwater capture, or community gardens. In an emergency, these spaces may

act as communication centers, distribution centers, or emergency shelters”. In order to implement these hubs throughout Medford, the City will need to work with residents and neighborhood groups to confirm siting of the hubs and ensure resources are appropriately allocated to be ready in the event of an emergency.



CR.1.2.1

Create a community resilience hub pilot in partnership with residents, especially those living in environmental justice communities and communities within the 100-yr floodplain.

CAAP
Strategy PH 2.3A

The CAAP builds on the previous Resilient Medford Resilience Hubs plan. In the public health section, the CAAP recommends pilot sites that need to be acquired or co-rented with an outside organization, the pilot site could be a City owned facility like a school,

library, or community center that was recently built or renovated, has redundant systems in case of system outages, and is sited within communities with a high need for the hub facility.

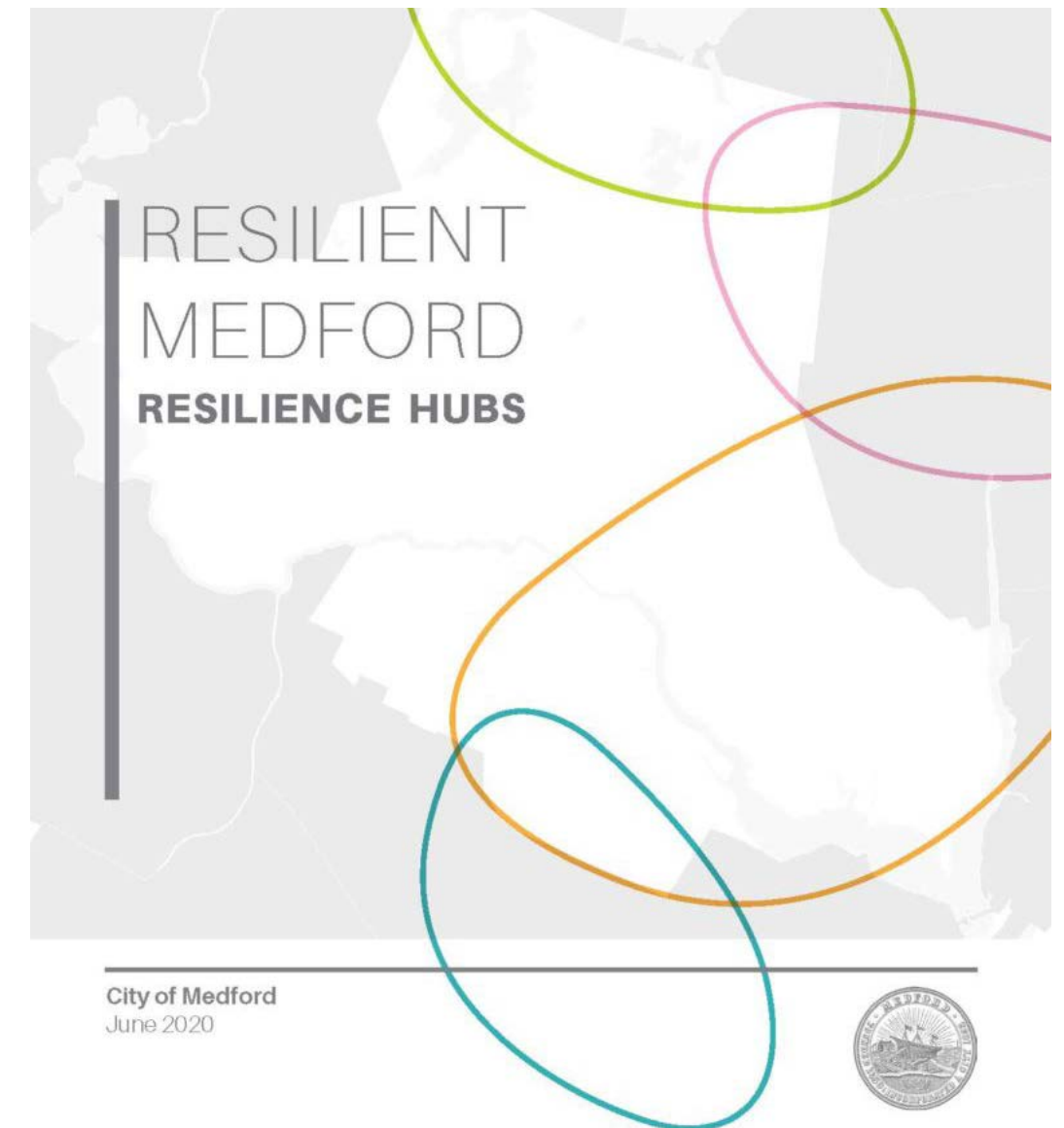


Figure 5 Resilient Medford is a previous climate health plan and relevant tool to inform the Comprehensive Plan's actions, such as a community resilience hub pilot.

ACHIEVE & EVOLVE THE 2022 CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN

CR.2.1 ADOPT ZONING CHANGES IDENTIFIED BY THE PLAN AND IDENTIFY METRICS TO ENSURE THAT THE NEW REGULATIONS HAVE THE ANTICIPATED IMPACT.

The City of Medford's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, October 2022 (CAAP) identifies a series of policies and actions that the City can take to address climate change. This plan sets a goal of zero net emissions by 2050, consistent with the state's goal. The plan includes recommended changes to the City's zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance controls activity in the built environment (buildings and sites), including new development and significant rehabilitation. The design of buildings and sites has an important impact on the usage of energy and materials: worldwide, the operations of buildings and construction activities are responsible for 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide and 36% of final energy use. Reduction in the use of energy and materials for new construction and in the use of energy for building operations is important for reaching Medford's goals for net zero emissions.

A combination of an increase in precipitation (from the number and intensity of events) and an increase in heat will have a dramatic impact on the built environment. New buildings and significant additions or rehabilitation must include adaptations to these conditions, while older buildings will need to be retrofitted. The City of Medford adopted the state's Stretch

Energy Code, and the state and international building codes may continue to change in response to climate change. However, zoning changes are within the control of City Council, with significant input from the Community Development Board, and new zoning regulations, based on the recommendations identified in the CAAP, are critical to the successful protection of the Medford community as the climate continues to change.

While the identification of metrics for successful implementation is discussed in Objective 1.2.1, such metrics are particularly important for this objective. The City's goal of moving toward net zero emissions by 2050 is dependent on achieving success in many different areas. The recommendations below are specific to the second part of this objective: identifying metrics to ensure that the new regulations have the anticipated impact. The City may wish to consider identifying the metrics for these goals before developing the text for recommended zoning changes so that all changes described in this comprehensive plan are responsive to the City's goal for net zero emissions by 2050.



"We would benefit from a new, greener building code"
Steering Committee Meeting, No. 5

CR.2.1.1

CAAP
Strategy BE 1.2.A

Review adopted environmental performance standards to incorporate climate resilience best practices.

Medford Leads by Example

The new police station and the public library are not only Medford's newest municipal buildings, they are also designed and constructed to operate on renewable energy sources in support of the City's goal of net

zero emissions by 2050. The City is also retrofitting existing buildings including the DPW facility and Andrews Middle School to improve energy efficiency and decrease city building reliance on fossil fuels.

CR.2.1.2

CAAP
Strategies
BE 2.2.A and B

Implement a benchmarking ordinance for large buildings and adopt performance standards for benchmarked buildings.

The City should investigate existing certification programs for guidance on current standards for energy-efficient development of buildings and sites. Such programs include, but are not limited to, USGBC' well-respected LEED program, the SITES program from the Sustainable Sites Initiative, and WELL from the International WELL Building Institute. The City will need to balance the requirements it establishes with an understanding of how new development is financed under changing economic circumstances. Often this balance leads to flexibility in the zoning ordinance; once the City has established the appropriate

metrics, the zoning ordinance can offer a menu of choices that will lead to the desired result. Such flexibility addresses different parcel sizes and shapes, new construction, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse, and shifts in the economy.

An advantage for the City is that the standards developed by these programs provide a model for offering different options to achieve the same goal. However, certification by these programs can be expensive; the City may wish to adopt specific standards without requiring full certification under the zoning.

Clean Buildings Incentive Program: Bellevue, Washington

The City of Bellevue, Washington, which is part of the metropolitan Seattle region, has become a national leader in energy use reduction of buildings. The City is using incentive programs and new city regulations to encourage existing owners of large buildings over 50,000 square feet using energy efficiency targets that exceed

state standards for clean energy use. These energy retrofit programs are geared toward mechanical updates and facade improvements that can drastically reduce inefficiencies in heating and cooling systems through incentive funds geared toward eventual compliance.

Source: <https://bellevuewa.gov/city-government/departments/community-development/environmental-stewardship/buildings-energy/clean#:~:text=The%20Bellevue%20Clean%20Buildings%20Incentive,WA%20State%20Clean%20Buildings%20standard.>

CR.2.1.3 Offer incentives and technical assistance to help residents and owners navigate state programs and work with energy providers to achieve exceptional energy performance.

At the state level, the state of Massachusetts offers numerous programs that provide financial incentives and educational resources to residents to adopt more sustainable practices. These efforts directly connect residents with the necessary resources and tools to shift to more environmentally friendly and energy

efficient alternatives, such as fossil fuels to clean and renewable energy and building retrofits.

*“Increase community knowledge of accessing renewable energy/resilience to renters and owners.”
Steering Committee Meeting No.5*

CR.2.1.4 Adopt flood resilience building guidelines.

Increased precipitation events will increase the number of flooding events from both stormwater and riverine flooding (also see 2.1.2). The City needs to adopt guidelines to increase resilience from flooding for both new buildings and existing ones and the sites on which those buildings are located. Such measures can include standards for the deployment of temporary flood barriers, retrofitting existing buildings with permanent solutions; and locating new development outside areas that flood or are projected to flood within the life of the building on a regular basis. Standards will need to distinguish between flooding types and frequency. Fortunately for Medford, the Mystic River is considered freshwater above

the Amelia Earhart Dam, so the corrosive effect of saltwater is not an issue. For new development in areas that do not flood now but may be subject to future riverine flooding, strategies could include floodable natural or paved buffers, with materials that will recover between floods. Ideas discussed in the CAAP include elevating or flood-proofing basements, ground floors, and building systems. Again, once the City has identified the appropriate measures, providing flexibility within the zoning ordinance to address a variety of physical and economic conditions will be critical to addressing these issues.

CAAP
Strategy BE 1.3.B

CR.2.1.5 Adopt design and material standards for cooler surfaces.

These standards should address large areas of impervious surfaces, such as roofs, building façades, and paved surfaces. Techniques could include any combination of materials that are lighter in color and

made of recycled materials; shade from trees or structures; or surfaces that produce energy from renewable sources. As noted above, the City will need to provide options for compliance within the zoning ordinance.

CAAP
Strategy PH 1.2.C

CR.2.1.6 Update zoning codes to support community health outcomes.

The Department of Planning, Development, and Sustainability should work with the Board of Health to derive metrics for desired community health outcomes based on the work the Board of Health is doing with the Mass in Motion program. Metrics related to the built environment could include physical connections from new development to public sidewalks and trails; location of new development within walking distance to

schools, healthy food choices, public transit, and services; mitigation of hazardous materials in buildings or on sites as part of new development; introduction of passive cooling and higher air quality in both new and retrofitted buildings; and other physical changes to the built environment that would support positive daily health outcomes.

CAAP
Strategy PH 1.1.A

CR.2.1.7 Adopt new landscape performance standards for heat mitigation, stormwater infiltration, and soil health.

In the CAAP, landscape performance standards for heat mitigation include the introduction of cooler materials and surfaces, such as structures, paving applications, and roofing systems that are reflective and provide shading in accordance with existing solar reflectance standards.

to absorb and evaporate stormwater.

The CAAP identifies amending city ordinances and the site plan review process as opportunities to integrate stormwater management into new developments. Given Medford’s vulnerability to flooding, these collective strategies would help reduce stormwater runoff by increasing the capacity

The CAAP outlines proposed standards for new developments in Medford to host healthy soils on the project site. This would require projects to choose one of four approaches to ensure healthy soils, from protecting native soil to changing existing site topsoil or subsoil to meet requirements through removal, regrading, and the introduction of new topsoil. Healthy soil allows for proper stormwater infiltration, carbon sequestration, and reduces erosion, while supporting overall ecological health.

CAAP
Strategy PH 1.2.C
Strategy EN 1.2.B
Strategy EN 1.2.C



Figure 6 Landscape remediation efforts help to improve stormwater management, amongst other benefits.

ACHIEVE & EVOLVE THE 2022 CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN

CR.2.2 ADOPT OTHER ORDINANCE CHANGES RELATED TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND LAND USE WITHIN THE CITY.

Within the CAAP, the City identified many strategies that apply to its own buildings, facilities, and land. These strategies are an important part of both the CAAP and this comprehensive plan, but this plan does not list all strategies identified by the CAAP. Strategies related to the development of metrics are described in 2.1.1 and strategies

related to specific changes to the zoning ordinance are linked to the relevant objectives of this comprehensive plan. The actions below have an impact on private properties or operations but are not part of the City's zoning ordinance.



CR.2.2.1

Develop a rental licensing ordinance with energy efficiency standards.

CAAP
Strategy BE 2.2.D

The recommendations in 2.1.1. address new construction, including additions and rehabilitation, that are the result of a private decision to initiate development. They do not address existing building stock in the absence of such a decision, and even renovation of many buildings,

particularly residential buildings, may not trigger thresholds in the zoning code. This recommended ordinance would help update existing rental housing stock over time by requiring registration, inspection, and upgrades to non-compliant housing stock.

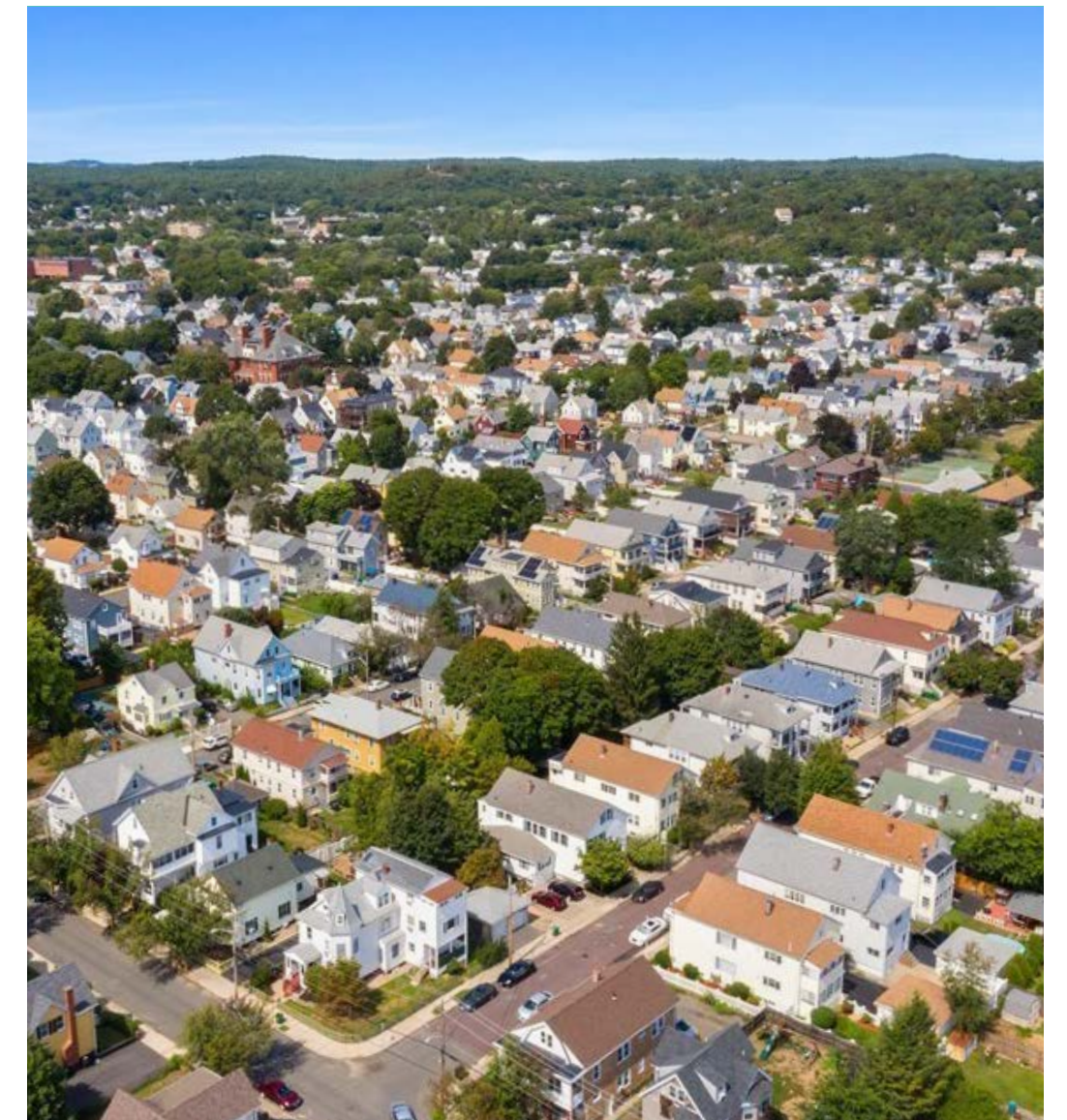


Figure 7 Energy efficiency standards can be applied to rental properties and owner-occupied homes alike, updating residencies to greener standards.

CR.2.2.2

Update Medford’s stormwater ordinance and stormwater regulations to meet best practices for stormwater management.

Medford has both a stormwater ordinance, as created by City Council, and stormwater regulations, created by the City Engineer. These documents should be updated to provide clear and comprehensive guidance for construction and long-term operations and maintenance activities to support the City’s current and future anticipated responsibilities for protecting its natural resources, providing for the health and safety of the City’s residents, and complying with the City’s regulatory requirements. The stormwater ordinance and stormwater regulations are vital to ensuring that the City can grow in a sustainable method. These updates will provide a modern basis for growth in line with the climate aims of the City.

Updates to the ordinance and regulations should address general stormwater management strategies, including

requirements for discharges to the City’s storm drain system to comply with Massachusetts Stormwater Management Standards, impervious lot coverage, and tree removals and canopy coverage. Updates should also include stormwater runoff and flooding strategies encompassing stormwater peak flow controls, stormwater runoff volume controls, on-site stormwater retainage, and flood resiliency best practices, among others. Water quality strategies including water quality controls encouraging the use of Green Infrastructure, Low Impact Development (LID), and other stormwater Best Management Practices (BMPs). Additionally, updating the compliance procedures including clear and comprehensive permit requirements, penalties for violations, post construction inspection, and defining the City’s rights should all be included.

Green City, Clean Waters: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Like Medford, the City of Philadelphia relies on traditional stormwater infrastructure that was built to get rain water and wastewater from buildings quickly out of the city, resulting in what are called combined sewer overflow (CSOs). When the city’s infrastructure and treatment plants are over capacity with wastewater, especially during rain events, the building wastewater system combines with the stormwater system and is dumped into city waterways - which

creates environmentally unsafe conditions for people, plants, animals, and our rivers. To meet city, state, and federal goals and regulations for reducing combined sewer overflows, the City of Philadelphia created the Green City, Clean Waters Plan aimed at reducing combined sewer overflows through upgrades to facilities and a robust green stormwater infrastructure program in streets, parks, schools, and on private property.

“Microbursts, flooding with stormwater basins bubbling up. Rivers rushing through yard. Stormwater maintenance is important”
Steering Committee
No 3



Figure 8 As part of the program, residents and businesses can adopt rain gardens, which require light maintenance and debris clearing to be effective.

CR.2.2.3

Update private hauler regulations and recycling requirements.

CAAP
Strategy PH 1.4.C

The CAAP notes that private haulers are only required to pick up trash, not recycling. As part of the City’s evaluation of all its waste and recycling policies and operations, this

regulation should be updated to require that private haulers also collect recycling materials.



Figure 9 Climate-friendly waste management requires the coordination of city services and emphasis on the reduction of landfill-bound waste through the proper implementation of multiple waste, reuse, and recycling streams.

PRESERVE & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

CR.3.1 REACH A TREE CANOPY RATIO NECESSARY TO REDUCE URBAN HEAT ISLAND TEMPERATURES AND REDUCE STORMWATER RUNOFF CITYWIDE.

Medford's tree canopy covers about 30% percent of the city's total land area, which can be attributed in part to the expansive open space network in the city, which includes open spaces with significant tree canopy along the Mystic River and in the Middlesex

Fells, a 2,575 acre natural area. There is still room to grow Medford's tree canopy within environmental justice communities, neighborhoods where urban heat island impacts are highest, and in privately held land.

"The tree canopy in Medford is too thin. There is a lack of shade in certain areas of the City"
Public Meeting, No. 1



CR.3.1.1

CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.A

Continue to build out Medford's digitized tree inventory.

Expand the tree inventory, if possible, to include trees on private land as well, to fully capture a digital snapshot of Medford's tree network.

CR.3.1.2

CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.B

Focus public tree investments in priority areas and align tree canopy investments with community goals.

Throughout the planning process, "tree canopy" and "tree planting" were among the most frequent ideas or concerns shared by community members. The City needs to engage in an urban forest master plan with Medford's neighborhoods to collaboratively identify targets for tree canopy expansion neighborhood by neighborhood and express

priority areas for tree plantings in parks, and other city owned properties.

Though there are opportunities to invest in trees on public lands throughout the City, priorities should be made to invest in the following areas first, taking into consideration community desires:

- Environmental justice communities
- Close to bus stations and between MBTA stops and retail/job destinations to provide shade and comfort on hotter than usual days
- Neighborhoods with lower than average tree canopy, targets to be developed together with those communities
- Areas that are prone to flooding where increased trees and tree canopy can both capture rainfall and improve the hydrologic capabilities of the soil
- Areas of high heat vulnerability

"As climate change continues it will be essential to have shady, wooded parks of native, ecology-sustaining trees"
Online Map

CR.3.1.3

CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.F

Introduce a tree protection ordinance for private land.

To ensure that the City can comprehensively expand its tree canopy, the City should introduce policies and regulations that require property owners to obtain a

permit for tree removal, protect healthy or significant trees from being removed, and incentivize more tree planting.

CR.3.1.4

CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.I

Build capacity and resources needed to support tree health, complete the digital tree inventory, and contribute to future tree related plans.

Capacity building could be completed in collaboration with state agencies like the Department of Conservation and Recreation, advocacy groups like Mass Audubon, and

could build on existing city tree-health and urban canopy protection efforts such as Adopt-A-Tree through Trees Medford.



Tree Canopy & Vegetation Areas Map

Figure 10 Tree Canopy & Vegetation Areas Map

- Large Vegetation Areas
- Street Trees
- Rare Species Habitat

CR.3.1.5

Include tree planting in every Complete Streets project.

See AA 1.1
CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.D

Incorporating tree planting within existing transportation infrastructure, such as complete streets, will reinforce transit-oriented development plans in Medford and provide a strategic location for street trees.

Street trees are an integral part of the multi-modal streetscape, providing necessary shade to cyclists, pedestrians, and transit users, as well as reducing the overall urban heat island effect of the larger area.

CR.3.1.6

Expand staffing and funding capacity to support tree canopy efforts, including a tree fund, dedicated staff, and volunteer/ambassador programs.

CAAP
Strategy EN 1.1.H
Strategy EN 1.1.I

To ensure that newly planted trees and existing trees in the city’s inventory are tended to, this action proposes the creation of a tree fund and accompanying labor to keep up with maintenance needs, both city staff and more formal volunteer entities

made up of different age groups, including students and young people. City staff will make it easier for the City of Medford to coordinate tree planting and maintenance internally and on projects and new developments.

“Walking habits from the pandemic have made me notice how thin our street canopy is - this month especially with so much heat!”
Public Workshop No. 1



Figure 11 A robust tree canopy has significant positive benefits, such as reduction in urban heat island effect and better air quality.

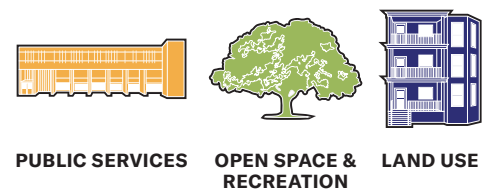
PRESERVE & ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES

CR.3.2 EXPAND ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION, GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND HABITAT AREAS.

The purpose of this objective is to improve and maintain biodiversity, ecological function, and native habitats in Medford by strengthening the health and resilience of Medford's natural resources and open spaces. Prior to development, much of Medford's open space consisted of wetlands, due to the city's location on the Malden and Mystic River watersheds. Implementing new passive

green infrastructure while restoring some of this land to its original wetlands conditions will assist in making Medford more resilient to environmental threats. These climate resilience planning decisions build off of existing plans, initiatives and projects, and can capitalize on Medford's existing open space network to improve the overall ecological health of the city and greater region.

"Microbursts, flooding with stormwater basins bubbling up, rivers rushing through yards... stormwater maintenance is important!"
Steering Committee Meeting No.3



CR.3.2.1

Use parks, streets and passive open space areas for stormwater management to improve water quality and manage quantity.

Support existing stormwater management efforts and those recommendations outlined in the Medford Climate Action and Adaptation Plan through the use of landscape techniques and materials that ultimately reduce rainwater runoff and

prevent flooding. Medford's extensive open space network provides the opportunity to leverage existing environmental conditions, such as soils, vegetation, and wetlands, to complement new stormwater infrastructure installations and construction projects.

OSRP 2019

CR.3.2.2

Restore wetlands within the riverfront areas and throughout Medford to create better ecological function and native habitat.

Medford's location on the Malden River and Mystic River watersheds leaves the area more vulnerable to flooding caused by heavy rainfall overwhelming the city's insufficient stormwater infrastructure. As time goes on, climate change will cause increased rainfall levels in addition to the increased likelihood of severe weather events. Wetland restoration presents a unique solution to local flooding by using existing environmental features and conditions for natural drainage and filtration. Medford contains many wetlands sites, which are characterized by marshes, wet soils, and specific vegetation, though much of this has

been paved over for previous development. Major wetlands locations, such as North Medford wetlands, areas along the rivers and other bodies of water, and the Middlesex Fells, are connected by a network of brooks and streams. The 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan for Medford provides a detailed action to restore wetlands through regrading and replanting, which will reduce erosion and rehabilitate natural habitats. These restoration projects must be carried out at the city and state level by Medford's Conservation Commission and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation.

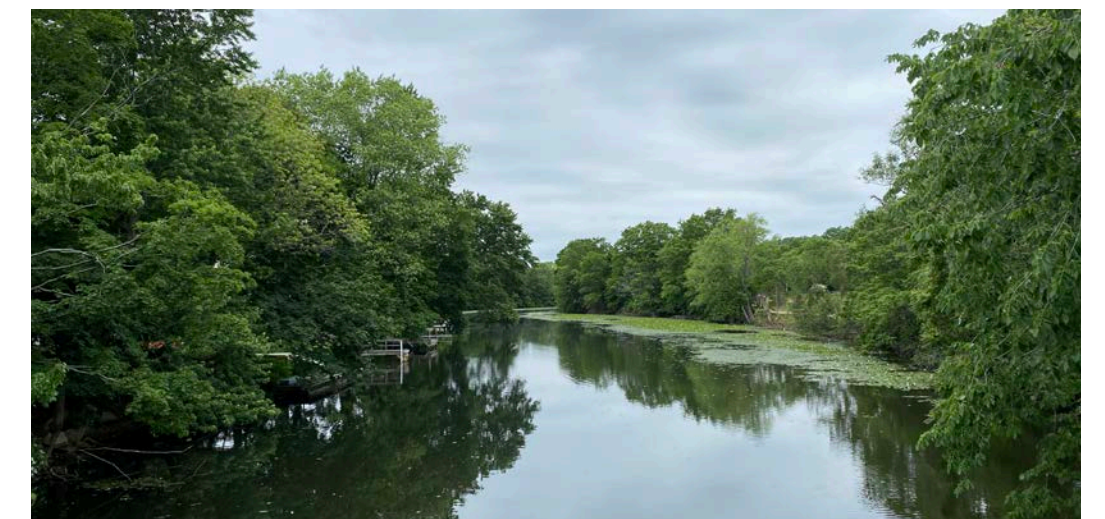


Figure 12 Medford's riversheds are in need of restoration to reinforce them against erosion and stormwater runoff.



Figure 13 The Mystic River Watershed is a critical natural resource that requires restoration and thoughtful management and conservation.

CR.3.2.3

Implement recommendations in partnership with Mystic River advocacy organizations.

The city should partner with organizations such as the Mystic River Watershed Initiative, the Mystic River Watershed Association, and the Resilient Mystic Collaborative to convene with various Mystic River and environmental stakeholders and community-based organizations focused on making the watershed safe, climate-resilient, and accessible to the public through

improved water quality and open space. Through these partnerships, the city can amplify its existing initiatives and carry out plan recommendations and actions related to the watershed. These recommendations will help to restore the watershed for residents and provide critical resources to Medford's portion of the river and the larger regional ecosystem as a whole.

CR.3.2.4

Introduce interpretive and educational signage along trails and in open spaces to educate and communicate about natural systems.

This action furthers recommendations from the 2019 Open Space and Recreation Plan. Proper signage can be used to provide basic information such as site identification (to note historic and significant places),

directions and wayfinding, informative and engaging educational content for Medford Parks visitors, as well as help protect important areas that must be treated sensitively.

*"The lakes are an amazing resource, as well as the Fells and the river."
Public Meeting, No. 1*



Figure 14 Examples of public and private efforts to improve signage for orientation and educational purposes at the riverfront.

SUPPORT COMMUNITY HEALTH & RESILIENCE

CR.3.3 PRIORITIZE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES

In Massachusetts, Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities are classified by Minority, Income, English language isolation, or any combination of these three groups. EJ populations in Medford are primarily Minority and Income, Minority alone, or Income alone. Medford does have a smaller population of Minority, Income, and English language isolation.

These communities are more likely to be disproportionately affected by climate change. Providing information to and receiving input from populations whose first language is not English can be challenging. The City of Medford has begun initiatives to create communication pathways with several language communities in the city. Lower-income households are likely to live in older housing, which is not well-adapted to the anticipated increase in cooling days (days over 90 degrees), and may not be able to afford adaptation measures. Minority populations are historically underrepresented in municipal governments, and their perspectives have not been part of planning for future impacts. Again, the City of Medford has begun outreach to different communities.

To ensure an equitable future for these communities when considering the impact of climate change on all Medford residents, the City must continue its outreach to these communities, solidifying and expanding on the efforts initially funded by the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant. Building a culture of trust now will help the EJ communities and the City plan for adaptation measures appropriate to the different neighborhoods and life experiences. As temperature and precipitation patterns change, increased precipitation events and resulting flooding and the harsh effect of summer heat islands will hurt all residents; the City will need a culture of communication and cooperation to respond effectively to those impacts and trusted leaders in the EJ communities to work with residents to address future needs. These could include cooling and warming stations, green infrastructure improvements to manage stormwater and provide more trees, and interventions to update older housing stock for energy and water efficiency.



CR.3.3.1

Draft actions in process with City-sponsored community liaisons.

During this planning process, the City has had a parallel project with the statewide Mass in Motion program, as funded by the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Action Grant the City was awarded. The focus of this program is on healthy eating and active living, and the Board of Health is the lead department in this effort. The Board of Health supported the public engagement in the process for this comprehensive plan by sharing the work of the community liaisons with the consultant team.

Medford's Community Liaisons, five individuals who work with specific cultural and language communities throughout the city, led engagement and outreach around community health for Mass in Motion. Some key issues in considering Environmental Justice include food security, access to recreation, climate change, and development within areas with concentrations of one or more Environmental Justice communities. Feedback from the community liaisons

about issues important to the communities with whom they are working has been incorporated into the relevant objectives and actions of this plan.

The implementation of this objective should include a City commitment to make the Cultural Liaison positions permanent, coupled with consistent outreach to the five language and cultural communities to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of these actions for the members of those communities. As new actions are brought forward for implementation, and especially as the city develops metrics for assessing the success of its actions, these communities should be involved in the discussions, included as partners in the implementation, and receive special attention in communications. Such communications should be in the appropriate languages and distributed to community-specific outlets, both physical and virtual.

Nourishing the North Shore: Newburyport, Massachusetts

Nourishing the North Shore serves 10 cities and towns now, but began with a single location for growing food. Their mission is to address food insecurity with a community-based focus. The organization partners with farmers to provide freshly grown food

and schools to recover excess food that would otherwise be thrown out. The food is distributed through farm shares, mobile markets, and a food pantry. They also offer cooking classes and a seedling sale.



Figure 15 Nourishing the North Shore addresses food insecurity through a number of food access and distribution initiatives.

ACCESS FOR ALL

Medford's mobility network currently focuses on serving those who drive and does not prioritize the use of sustainable modes such as transit, biking, and walking. Providing access for all ensures that Medford's transportation systems and infrastructure are safe, accessible, and efficient for people and goods to move freely. This requires the creation of walkable communities, multimodal roads, and safe streets that encourage pedestrians and cyclists of all ages and abilities, and a sustainable mobility plan that considers the impact of fuel emissions on the environment and works to reduce carbon footprint.

With the growing demand for accessible and reliable transit and investments in extensions to regional transit networks such as the Green Line Extension, Medford should anticipate transit needs through coordination with the MBTA and assessing bus stop design compliance and gaps in the system. Prioritizing transit improvements can increase connectivity to the greater transit system in Medford, which consists of bus routes, rapid transit, and the commuter rail. As up to 13% of Medford's roadways are controlled by regional agencies, the City needs to assess how larger arterials such as the Fellsway and I-93 impact circulation across Medford for all modes, and how they should be improved to enhance multimodal connectivity systemwide. Parking transparency, usability, and management practices are additional challenges for the City, as parking for different users is limited, requirements for development are outdated, and the residential parking permit system is difficult to understand. Considering these competing demands for transit, parking, and roadway improvements, the City needs to address the lack of connectivity for those who walk and bike. Although many residential streets have sidewalks, high traffic roads and commercial centers require significant

upgrades to connect to the adjacent neighborhoods and encourage mode shift.

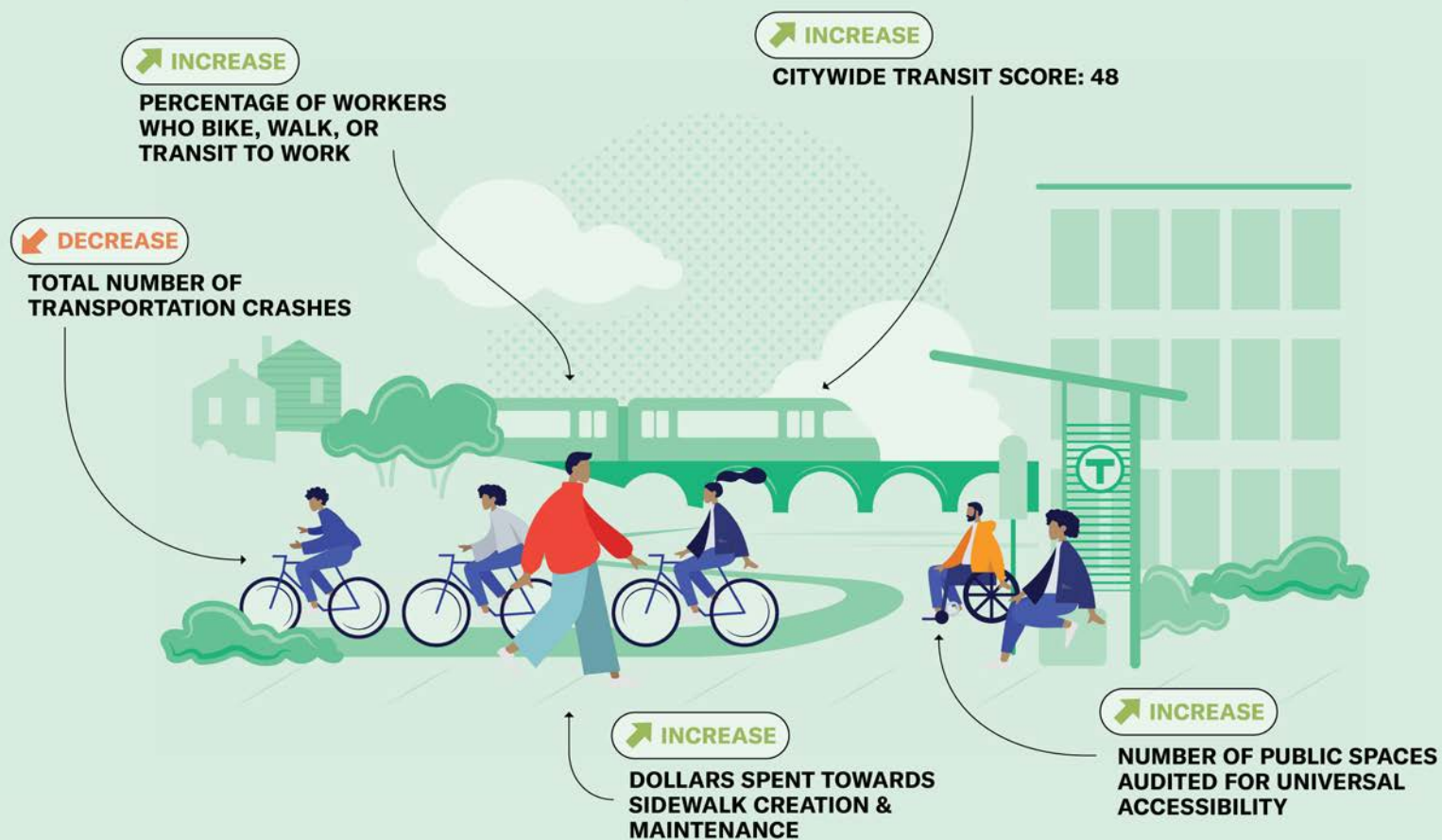
This plan proposes strategic solutions to address accessibility and connectivity for all, including implementing and building from the Complete Streets Program particularly for the City's main streets and central business districts, improving sidewalk to increase ADA compliance and universal design standards, developing a centralized transit hub, investing in wayfinding, and concentrating efforts on the circulation within Medford Square for all modes.

Other key issues, namely traffic congestion, poor infrastructure, disconnected multimodal networks, and access to parking can be addressed through coordination between City departments and regional transportation stakeholders such as MassDOT, strategically prioritizing improvements developed through past plans and design efforts, and baking innovative design guidelines into zoning provisions, future development requirements, and future projects. Road safety is a persistent and urgent issue for all modes in Medford, with proper lighting, pedestrian safety at major crossings, and cyclist safety as top concerns.

To truly achieve access for all modes, Medford must implement solutions that fill the gaps in multimodal networks, focus on coordination efforts with regional entities to prioritize long-term transportation projects and harmonize planned improvements, and enhance the experience for all modes and levels of mobility. While these efforts will benefit City core, they are connected to a holistic regional approach that sees Medford as a part of an integrated network connecting nearby communities and cities.



ACCESS FOR ALL BENCHMARKS



GOALS

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Figure 1. Traffic congestion remains a key issue in Medford, and can be alleviated through multimodal and accessible strategies.



CONNECT MULTIMODAL NETWORKS

AA.1.1 CONTINUE TO IMPLEMENT THE COMPLETE STREETS POLICY TO ACCOMMODATE ALL ROAD USERS.

Medford's Complete Streets Policy aims to accommodate all road users by creating a road network that meets the needs of individuals utilizing a variety of transportation modes. Complete Streets promote integrated and connected transportation networks, allowing people to move easily and safely across all their destinations, and are designed and operated to provide safety and accessibility for all users of roadways. This includes balancing spaces for drivers, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit, and encouraging use of sustainable modes by providing dedicated spaces for them.

Looking forward into the future of transportation in Medford, existing policies, zoning, and design standards need to be revised to promote Complete Streets, encourage mode shift, and strategically prioritize pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure investments. By compiling all proposed strategies and designs past studies and capital improvement plans targeting

streetscape design, safety improvements, and accessibility enhancements, the City can create a consolidated list of short-, medium-, and long-term projects. By integrating Complete Streets policies into zoning provisions and design standards, the City can set the precedent for future development, streetscape design, and the integration of shared streets into the road network.

Key action items for this objective start with developing a comprehensive inventory of multimodal network gaps, shared street components in the roadway network, and existing and proposed roadway projects. Once projects and assets are mapped and inventoried and design guidelines are established, the City should develop a prioritized list of capital projects based on implementation efforts required, timeline, cost, and equity impact. The following action items document how the City can develop a road network that accommodates all modes.

“Medford has so many good resources but they can be disconnected from each other. How can we connect them so you can get around the city?”
Public Workshop No. 1



MOBILITY

AA.1.1.1

Ensure that all future design complies with Complete Streets Policy, focusing on early steps to create safe east-west bike routes through the City.

All roadway design within the City should comply with the Policy, with the aim of every reconstructed roadway becoming a Complete Street over the useful life of the infrastructure. Because this will create a patchwork of Complete Streets, efforts should be made to prioritize reconstruction

on key corridors to ensure an uninterrupted network. One early action should be to create a safe east-west bicycle route from West Medford to Wellington through Medford Square in order to provide safer connectivity for cyclists and encourage sustainable travel.

AA.1.1.2

Develop and maintain a publicly-accessible comprehensive map and inventory of pedestrian and bike facility infrastructure to encourage public understanding of available network.

As Medford strives to become a pedestrian and bike friendly community, it is important to track progress and provide information to users. Building on the 2016 Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan, the City shall create a publicly-accessible resource that tracks the presence, type, and condition of sidewalks and bike lanes City-wide. The increase in cyclists within the City and surroundings has increased the need for

a comprehensive, safe, and well marked bicycle network. The resource will allow for trip planning and allow advocates and neighbors to work with the City on improvements. The map can be coupled with improved on-street signage and safety measures to make the network more visible and connected, allowing bicycling to be a more desirable and accessible transportation alternative.

AA.1.1.3

Prioritize infrastructure projects which reduce gaps in sidewalk and bicycle network, in coordination across multiple departments.

Eliminating gaps in the sidewalk network makes it more appealing to walk, while connected bike lanes make it more appealing to bike in any environment – leading to fewer cars on the road improved city connectivity, and safer travel. In order to create a network of pedestrian and bicycle connections across the City, projects and agencies

must be coordinated. Roadways within Medford are not exclusively controlled by the City, so this recommendation will require coordination between the City of Medford, DCR, and MassDOT. The City should create a prioritization of improvements independent of agency ownership, then work with the respective state agencies to promote projects in line with City goals.

“Provide more connections to people without cars.”
Public Workshop No. 1

AA.1.1.4 Implement the proposed short- and long-term improvements from the 2018 Medford Square Priority Roadways Improvement Study.

The improvements from the 2018 Medford Square Priority Roadways Improvement Study should be implemented to provide a safer connection and reduced travel times for all users of Medford Square. The Study included recommendations to make the Square safer and more welcoming for pedestrians. Increased pedestrian traffic within the Square will lead to increased economic activity at local businesses and contribute to the vibrant place outcomes of Medford Square. The Study called for both short-term and long-term improvements.

Items to be completed in the short-term include regularly maintaining crosswalk pavement markings, fixing curb cuts that are not ADA compliant, and installing sharrows at appropriate locations along the corridor to protect bicyclists. Proposed long-term improvements include considering signalization at the intersection of High Street at Governors Avenue in addition to a series of additional studies to optimize flow and access, such as redesigning the central intersection at Medford Square.

AA.1.1.5 Update design code and development permitting processes to integrate the City’s Complete Streets policy.

Where appropriate, the City’s Zoning Ordinance should provide a menu of options to support enhanced mobility for projects that meet specific thresholds. Options could include one or more of the following:

- Site driveways to minimize disruption to the public sidewalk.
- Restore damaged public sidewalk materials post-construction.
- Connect the principal entrance of the building to a public sidewalk.
- Install bicycle racks on-site for visitors.
- Provide covered bicycle storage for tenants.
- Provide showers in commercial units for employees who commute by bicycle.
- Plant trees that shade public sidewalks (see C.R. 3.1.5)
- Separate on-site parking from the public sidewalk by a visually permeable barrier that includes a landscaped buffer.
- Provide parking to the side or rear of the principal building. Do not locate parking between the principal façade and the front lot line.
- Provide benches accessible to public sidewalks.
- Provide appropriate lighting and transparency of the façade at ground level; avoid blank façades along a public sidewalk.
- Include public art visible from a public way.

See CR 3.1.5



Figure 2. The 2018 Medford Square Priority Roadways Improvement Study called for both short- term and long-term improvements.

AA.1.1.6 Develop performance measures to assess the rate, success, and effectiveness of Complete Streets implementation project.

Since 2019, the City has prioritized the implementation and prioritization of Complete Streets projects citywide. High demand streets and intersections, including High Street and Allston Street, West Medford Square, Winthrop Circle, and the Boston Avenue corridor, have seen significant improvement to bicycle accommodations and pedestrian infrastructure, such as the implementation of bicycle lanes, ADA-compliant curb ramps, rectangular rapid flashing beacons, and new crosswalks. In anticipation of upcoming Complete Streets projects, the City should develop an evaluation program to monitor success, understand the effectiveness of existing improvements, and inform future projects and design.

vehicle speeds, and multimodal activity before and after implementation, as well as providing justification for future Complete Streets designs. Analyzing pre-and post-implementation metrics will help the City understand which Complete Streets components are the most effective in terms of slowing down vehicle speeds, increasing mode shift, and most importantly, which solutions to implement in future designs.

Key objectives should pull from the 2019 Complete Streets plan, build off additional needs from past mobility efforts, and include input from key stakeholders and the public. To create a comprehensive evaluation program, the City should first establish a set of high-level measures, which can encompass safety, connectivity, vehicle circulation, accessibility, usability, and multimodal facilities enhancements. Upon the determination of core measures, the evaluation team should define targeted and data-driven metrics to assess each measure. The finalized set of measures and metrics should then be applied to Complete Street projects across the City and results published and recorded to compare against existing roadways and intersections slated for potential future reconstruction.

Precedent examples of Complete/Safe Streets Evaluation Programs developed by cities and agencies highlight the need to establish program wide goals and objectives, define key metrics and approach to measuring said goals, collect the data, and publish the results. Evaluating implemented Complete Streets projects provides a direct comparison of congestion, safety,

“Medford needs to be more walkable and better connected”
Public Workshop No.2

AA.1.1.7 Evaluate the effectiveness of existing performance standards related to transportation access and impacts.

The City recently developed performance standards for development as part of its zoning recodification process. Periodically, the effectiveness of these performance

standards should be evaluated to determine if there is a need for any revisions to minimize the impacts of new development and maintain access for all.

CONNECT MULTIMODAL NETWORKS

AA.1.2 ADVOCATE AND PARTNER ON CHANGES TO STATE OR REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Roadway ownership can be complex within any community, and Medford is no exception. Roads within the City of Medford are owned by the City, MassDOT, and DCR, with over 13% of all roadway miles belonging to a state agency – a high number for an urban environment. Upgrades and rehabilitation to state owned roadways require the City to advocate and collaborate with other state entities, forming effective partnerships that can span across multiple projects and processes.

Considering connectivity, accessibility, and safety are key priorities for Medford’s mobility network, a roadway system under varying jurisdictions does not benefit multimodal connectivity and coordinated infrastructure

improvements. To achieve this objective, the City should capitalize off projects slated for development or previously designed by DCR and MassDOT, such as the Road Safety Audits and traffic studies. Pushing these agencies to coordinate amongst each other can help prioritize projects that address connectivity and safety issues. The City should utilize coordination efforts as opportunities to advocate for critical projects that impact congestion, multimodal challenges, and accessibility for all modes such as improvements to I-93. The following action items address specific strategies to make critical and impactful changes to Medford’s roadway network.



MOBILITY

AA.1.2.1

Take advantage of DCR/MassDOT planning initiatives to push for coordinated improvements to shared roads and other transportation infrastructure.

As DCR and MassDOT own and operate key roadways within the City of Medford, the changes made by those agencies have a profound impact on circulation, traffic, connectivity and multimodal accessibility. Increased communication between DCR, MassDOT, and the City of Medford can benefit all potential impacted users. Currently, MassDOT is undertaking a planning study of Wellington Circle, which

has significant City feedback incorporated. Partnering and discussing other key overlapping areas may help to improve conditions around the I-93 corridor owned by MassDOT, and DCR roadways such as the Fellsway and Mystic Valley Parkway. The City should continue to look for opportunities to get involved with state-led initiatives to advocate for local improvements.

AA.1.2.2

Advocate for improvements to I-93 to reduce cut-through traffic.

*“Regional traffic burden makes it hard to create pedestrian friendly environments in the squares.”
Public Meeting No. 1*

The City of Medford experiences additional local congestion when slow moving traffic on I-93 causes drivers to exit the highway and cut through local Medford streets. Improvements to traffic flow on I-93 can help maintain throughput and reduce congestion. Cars idling on the highway additionally create emissions locally in Medford, further

burdening the City. Medford staff should work with MassDOT to maintain effective highway operations, including providing additional driver information to help shift trips and keep them on high-capacity roads, and elimination of choke-points at either end of the corridor. Alternative modes, such as buses on the highway shoulder, can improve capacity and keep cars off local roadways. In certain circumstances, the City may want to explore consolidation or elimination of certain highway exits.

AA.1.2.3

Support connectivity across I-93 via pedestrian crossings.

From a pedestrian perspective, I-93 cuts the City of Medford in half with only a few crossing locations that align with highway on and off ramps. Providing safe and convenient pedestrian crossings will increase connection between neighborhoods, improve walkability, and reduce the need for short car trips. The City should undertake an effort to examine where

residents would benefit from crossings, and work with MassDOT to improve existing crossings or introduce new ones. This includes improving the pedestrian condition at key underpasses such as Webster Street and Valley Street, and working with MassDOT to create streamlined pedestrian-priority intersections at both rotaries.

AA.1.2.4

Implement and prioritize the recommendations from recently completed Road Safety Audits (RSA), traffic studies, and MassDOT’s ongoing Wellington Circle area study.

*“Wellington Circle is hard to walk or bike through.”
Public Workshop No. 1*

A Road Safety Audit (RSA) is the formal safety performance examination of an existing or future road or intersection by an independent, multidisciplinary team. It qualitatively estimates and reports on potential road safety issues and identifies opportunities for improvements

in safety for all road users. Recently, MassDOT has completed RSAs for a number of locations in Medford, including at the intersection of Fellsway (Route 28) and Riverside Avenue, and at Roosevelt Circle. Implementing the recommendations from these key studies will improve safety for all users – drivers, pedestrians, transit, bicyclists - in the City of Medford.

AA.1.2.5

Advocate for the state to develop a consolidated infrastructure maintenance plan for all state-owned assets.

As state-owned mobility assets make up a significant portion of Medford’s roadway system, it is vital for the City to understand and be able to coordinate with and advocate to state agencies on improvements. A consolidated, cross-agency (MassDOT

and DCR) infrastructure maintenance and improvement plan would allow the City to properly plan for investments within its borders, and either advocate for changes or align projects to coincide as possible.

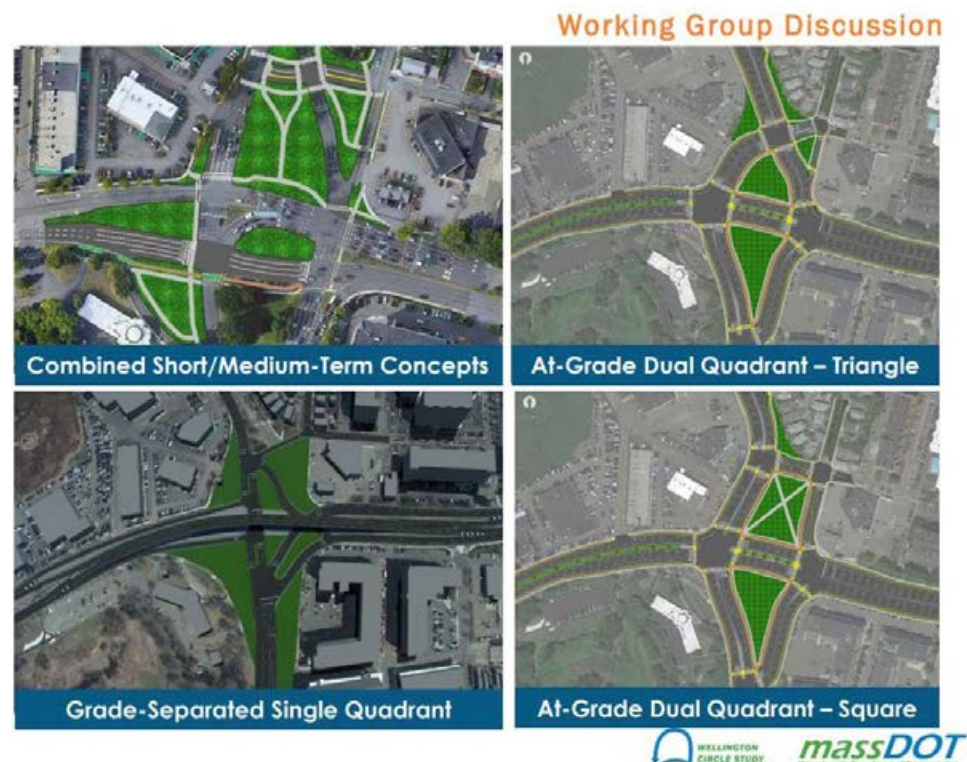


Figure 3. Alternative concepts were discussed at a working group meeting as part of MassDOT’s ongoing Wellington Circle area study.

CONNECT MULTIMODAL NETWORKS

**AA.1.3
CREATE A LONG-TERM PLAN FOR CITY ROADWAY INVESTMENT**

Creating a long-term plan for safety and connectivity improvements on City roadways will ensure a pipeline of significant investments, allowing City leadership to budget and manage over a longer time horizon. In part because Medford’s roadways lie in the hands of so many owners, the City has a disconnected multimodal network and inconsistent roadway improvements, typically

on more residential streets. By coordinating across a long-term plan and identifying network gaps, the City can target roadways in poor condition or streets that provide no accessibility for alternative modes. The following action items provide details on how to address the prioritization and organization of long-term roadway investment projects.



Figure 4. Multimodal infrastructure and investments facilitate the safe streets for cyclists and motorists.



AA.1.3.1

Develop a city-wide street infrastructure rehabilitation plan to show funded plans for maintaining roadway assets equitably across the city over their entire useful life.

Medford currently lacks a citywide plan for investments in the maintenance and rehabilitation of roadways. Roadways can undergo construction for a variety of reasons, including the need to repair or change driving, walking, and cycling surfaces, for underground utility replacement, or to support adjacent development. Having a consolidated citywide plan allows for different departments as well as the public to understand where investment is being targeted, and how construction projects can be combined in order to create advantages that address multiple issues at one time. For example, a major development project may reconstruct a roadway from utilities through to new pavement – leaving a new asset that should not need to be dug up again in the near future, unless coordination does not occur.

the ability to communicate clearly with residents where investments are to be made. Further, any such plan should be equity weighted, to allow for investments to be targeted to where they are most needed. Dense, low-income and majority-minority neighborhoods are less likely to produce advocacy around sidewalk tripping hazards and potholes yet improving conditions in these areas can lead to outsized benefits due to their land use characteristics. Walkability and bicycle conditions are especially valuable in areas surrounding transit, as they can encourage transit usage. Neighboring communities are making investment decisions based on equity, such as Boston’s switch in 2018 to focus on equity weighting in the execution of sidewalk repairs. Boston determined that the poorest sidewalk conditions were in the poorest neighborhoods, but repairs were instead focused on addressing user complaints, which more often came from wealthier neighborhoods. The new Boston plan now bases investments on observed conditions, a much more equitable approach.

This predictability and transparency benefits those who live, work, and visit Medford, as it allows for clearer budgeting, and

“Medford roads are plagued with potholes and difficult for driving and biking - especially side streets.”
Public Workshop No.1



Figure 5. A city-wide infrastructure repair strategy prioritizes much-needed roadway investments in Medford and helps connect the city to the greater region.

AA.1.3.2

Improve visibility and understanding of unaccepted roadways.

Unaccepted roads are roads that are not owned by MassDOT, DCR, or the City of Medford, and instead responsibility lies with the roadway abutters. On street signs they are often referred to as “Private Roads”, however, unaccepted roads are open for travel. Unaccepted roads create a disjointed user experience as they are not required to follow typical design standards, so may or may not have lane markings, sidewalks, bike lanes, or other typical roadway layouts.

others are not. Street signs are confusing as some say “Private Way” or “Private Road” when the road is in fact not private.

The Comprehensive Plan recommends the following: for the City to identify, catalog, and map all unaccepted roads; to create a standard for services provided to unaccepted roads; create a website to inform the public and residents about unaccepted roadways; and to standardize street signage for unaccepted roads, including providing connections to online resources where feasible. These changes will make the public more aware of the impact these roadways have on the community, cut down on complaints to the City which it cannot act on, and create an environment of improvements to be made.

“Private roads make it difficult to coordinate streetscape improvements.”
Public Workshop No. 2

The unaccepted roads situation in Medford is significant because almost 20% of all roadway miles are unaccepted. There is no clear standard of services provided to Unaccepted roads, some are plowed and cleaned, while

AA.1.3.3

Determine how to best integrate currently unaccepted streets into City ownership to allow for development of safe, standardized sidewalks and bicycle routes.

Once Unaccepted roads have been identified and cataloged, the City should undertake an effort to determine whether roads can be accepted by the City, and the level of investment needed to bring all these roadways up to current design standards. This will involve:

- Evaluating the road conditions of each Unaccepted roadway segment, so the City can consider the costs of upgrades
- Identifying roads that meet requirements so that they can potentially be accepted in the near future
- Notifying residents that they live on Unaccepted roads and creating and circulating an “Unaccepted Road Betterment Guide” which outlines:
 - The process for getting a roadway accepted by the City
 - The services the town can provide
 - The services the town cannot provide, and steps to receive these services, such as road repair
- Developing a budget estimate for capital construction and operating cost
- Consulting a legal team for title and tax considerations

COORDINATE MOBILITY & DEVELOPMENT

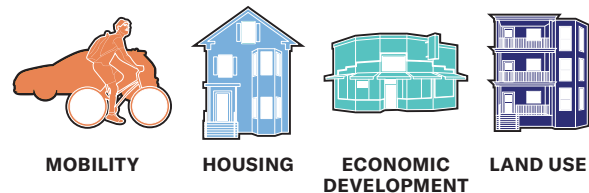
AA.2.1 INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF RESIDENTS, JOBS, AND DESTINATIONS IN AREAS WITH HIGH TRANSIT ACCESS TODAY OR IN COORDINATION WITH PLANS FOR EXPANDED MULTI-MODAL ACCESS.

Medford has many valuable jobs, leisure activities, outdoor recreation spaces, and commercial centers that are strong assets for work and play. Spanning a range of industries and areas of interest, these assets are attractive to many Medford residents who may seek to use them. With eight commercial centers and many other amenities in other neighborhoods, these attractions are distributed across Medford. Mobility must be a key consideration in future development patterns to ensure that all residents have equitable access to these amenities.

Development patterns that are compatible with transit accessibility are key elements of an equitable future for Medford. Many residents rely on transit hubs that provide reliable and affordable access to jobs, schools, shopping, and other resources within and outside of Medford. The City should pursue initiatives to center development around transit, increase access to multiple modes of transportation, and improve walkability to key assets. This development should be mixed use, including varied housing typologies, affordable housing, and diverse commercial amenities.

“Mystic Ave could be an employment center for high paying, professional jobs.”
Public Meeting No. 1

“Medford Square should be the vibrant center, but it currently is not.”
Public Workshop No.2



AA.2.1.1

Allow and promote increased density and mixed uses within walking distance of MBTA train stations and major bus hubs.

Many areas of Medford are within walking distance of transit options such as MBTA rail stations (including the Green Line as well as regional rails) and local bus stops. The

City should review zoning codes and other development guidelines to encourage higher density and mixed use development in these areas.

AA.2.1.2

Promote transit-oriented mixed-use development along emerging corridors like Mystic Avenue and Mystic Valley Parkway.

Aside from existing commercial centers, Medford has several emerging corridors that have significant potential as mixed use, transit-oriented districts. Major corridors like Mystic Avenue and Mystic Valley Parkway already offer many business and housing options. Further development can increase the housing diversity through

medium density projects that include a mix of uses to attract new businesses to fill existing gaps. The City should work to promote these corridors to developers and seek to attract mixed use projects. Neighborhood plans in these areas should be pursued to identify and implement locally-tailored development strategies.

AA.2.1.3

Evaluate current density in transit-rich areas and consider increases that are compatible with areas of lower density.

The City should evaluate existing density around transit hubs and work with local communities to identify opportunities for density increases that meet the needs of current residents. When potential

discrepancies arise around issues such as parking, the City should develop strategies to mitigate residents' concerns while preserving the ability to add density.

AA.2.1.4

Evaluate whether Medford's current zoning is consistent with the new housing requirements for MBTA communities and modify zoning to bring the City into compliance and preserve its right to access state grants.

The Department of Housing and Community Development is expected to release final regulations later this year on MGL Chapter 40A, Section 3A. Once those regulations are released, the city should evaluate its zoning relative to the requirements. Section 3A requires that communities with access

to public transit have at least one zoning district of reasonable size within 0.5 miles of a commuter rail station, subway station or bus station. This district must allow multifamily housing as of right, without age restrictions, and of a type that is suitable for families with children.



Figure 6. Protected bike lanes provide clear guidance for bikes and for service or ride share vehicles, ensuring safe movement for all.

AA.2.1.5

Create design guidelines or studies to inform how areas of higher density can transition effectively to areas of lower density. Update zoning to address the uses, dimensional standards and development standards required.

*“Look for edges, pockets where there can be transitions from single to multi-family housing.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 2*

Evaluate the edges between residential-only zoning districts and zoning districts that contain a mix of allowable land uses, including commercial, industrial, and higher-density residential. Develop design guidelines and update the zoning ordinance to establish standards for a transition zone from areas of more intense uses to areas of less intense use.

The City of Medford has two single-family districts and three apartment districts. These districts allow

limited non-residential uses. As the City considers a zoning strategy that protects existing residential neighborhoods and enhances existing mixed-use squares, village nodes, and commercial corridors, these edges between districts and uses become an important tool in mitigating concerns about higher intensities of land use. The City could address such concerns with standards for step-downs in building heights, landscaped buffers, placement of buildings on lots, changes in allowable uses, and other strategies to transition between areas of different land uses.

AA.2.1.6

Create policies to manage various demands on the curbside areas, from service vehicles and deliveries to rideshare vehicles.

The emergence in service, delivery, and rideshare vehicles has increased the demand for access to the curb. Conflicts at the curb arise when multiple vehicle types or purposes want to engage in the same space – such as delivery drivers stopping in bus stops or bike lanes, or service vehicles having no space to safely perform duties.

Some ways to address this conflict include allocating flexible curb space in an equitable manner, where vehicles may stop temporarily during peak and/or off-peak hours based on the demand, and by encouraging loading and unloading activities in off-street facilities or on peripheral streets. Frequently stopping vehicles can create road safety and circulation hazards and providing clear space for today’s needed activities ensures a peaceful coexistence in the roadway.

To manage the curb, the City should determine the primary loading and unloading activities along streets adjacent to active uses, collect data to evaluate the trends, curbside conflicts, typical duration of stay patterns, and demand during peak and off-peak hours. A curbside management pilot program can help the City test out new curbside regulations based on the collected data, inform the public, business owners, and developers of upcoming curbside changes, and collect feedback. It is integral that upon the implementation of temporary and permanent curbside management practices, proper signage should be developed that defines restrictions, regulations, and short-term versus long-term curbside locations.

COORDINATE MOBILITY & DEVELOPMENT

AA.2.2 RIGHT-SIZE PARKING ACROSS ALL COMMERCIAL CENTERS.

It is important to provide adequate parking for all commercial centers. This includes determining the volume required for each commercial center and providing the appropriate number of ADA spaces and sufficient nearby parking as the street network allows. Medford's existing parking system provides limited parking in areas of high demand and creates a barrier to development and economic growth. Within core commercial zones, parking restrictions and technology are confusing for all users, and certain demands including short-term drop-off/pick-up activities and dedicated long-term parking is not accommodated in the current

network. By prioritizing key recommendations from past parking efforts and building off of historical parking demand and inventory data, the City can help to improve parking management practices, streamline payment strategies and regulations, and create a more pleasant parking experience for all users. The following section describes action items to address parking concerns for all users and develop a comprehensive assessment of parking demand, inventory, parking by type, and payment technology.

“There must be a way to address parking in Medford Square. A mixed use downtown with great stores and restaurants has to be possible.”
Public Workshop No.1



AA.2.2.1

Prioritize and implement the recommendations from the March 2021 Parking Policy and Enforcement Commission Report.

The recommendations from the report include investing in public infrastructure for electric/zero-emission vehicles and building multi-family housing near public transit stations. These recommendations will add additional charging space to public areas and increase electric vehicle ownership within the City of Medford, along with encouraging developers who build multi-family housing near transit to reduce the number of parking spaces required per dwelling unit.

The recommendations from this report are important to modernize and improve the current parking conditions across the City from Medford Square to residential streets. Other recommendations include a new residential parking program, action to collect outstanding parking fees, and 15-minute parking options in defined business districts.

AA.2.2.2

Determine needed parking volume in each commercial square and perform inventory of spaces.

The recommendations from the report include investing in public infrastructure for electric/zero-emission vehicles and building multi-family housing near public transit stations. These recommendations will add additional charging space to public areas and increase electric vehicle ownership within the City of Medford, along with encouraging developers who build multi-family housing near transit to reduce the number of parking spaces required per dwelling unit.

The recommendations from this report are important to modernize and improve the current parking conditions across the City from Medford Square to residential streets. Other recommendations include a new residential parking program, action to collect outstanding parking fees, and 15-minute parking options in defined business districts.



Figure 7. The need for clear parking strategies in Medford Square was a priority for community members during the third public workshop.

AA.2.2.3 Perform a citywide safety audit of parking, with the aim of removing angled parking.

The recently created Parking Department should conduct a safety audit of parking and determine new parking standards for the City. Curbside parking can be provided as parallel, angled, or head-in in various environments. While angled and head-in parking can increase the number of parking spaces, they are no longer considered the safest option for vulnerable roadway users,

as they can create challenging situations for pedestrians and bicyclists. The blind spots for vehicles entering and exiting these spaces can contribute to collisions between vehicles and those who walk or bike. Moving to parallel parking also allows for curb-to-curb space to be used for transit priority, bicycle accommodations or wider sidewalks.

AA.2.2.4 Standardize parking payment methods and values in each commercial square. Recommended 2 hour metered parking with the first 15 minutes free.

Currently, Medford has a somewhat confusing array of parking costs and restrictions. To improve the ease of parking within the commercial squares for all users, parking payment methods and values should be standardized across the entire City. This will reduce confusion and questions for those who frequent high demand commercial zones. For commercial squares, the aim is to price parking to balance the convenience for drivers with the desire to promote sustainable modes of travel.

A performance-based approach should be implemented in the long term, but in adapting to that, an immediate change can be made to only charge stays longer than 15 minutes, with a limit of 2 hours. This preserves some ability for quick access to businesses without cost, while creating incentive not to park all day at metered spaces and provide availability for visitors to support the local economy.



Figure 8. Solar panels installed on parking garages present an opportunity to integrate sustainable features onto transit infrastructure.

AA.2.2.5 Integrate a public garage into future redevelopment in Medford Square. (Require the garage be open for parking at the same rate as on-street meters, with a specific pass program for business owners/staff, and to accommodate evening events.)

The previous parking garage in Medford Square closed in 2005 and was never replaced. It is recommended that a new garage is built on the prior garage site or nearby to increase the parking available in Medford Square. The garage must also be coupled with a site redevelopment plan to help densify the Square and provide new retail inventory at the ground level. Making parking options in Medford Square more accessible makes it more likely that resident and visitors frequent local

businesses and attractions. In combination with standardized parking payment methods, a parking garage can additionally alleviate pressure caused by simultaneous events within the Square, such as those at City Hall and the Chevalier Theater. The space can also be used to free up space adjacent to businesses by having staff parking for local workers. This must be completed as a comprehensive look at parking across the Square, where some on-street spots are repositioned to the garage in order to make needed improvements to circulation and safety within the Square.

“Build the parking garage that was talked about here years ago. There’s some great stuff in the square but parking there can be a nightmare at times.”
Online Map

AA.2.2.6 Add sustainability features to commercial center parking such as solar arrays, stormwater management, and/or electric vehicle charging.

A parking garage in Medford Square will improve the parking conditions and improve the ease of visiting the area. However, parking garages are not typically efficient structures. Adding solar arrays, stormwater management, and/or electric vehicle charging will create a garage to carry Medford into the future. The extensive

roof space of a parking garage lends itself to sustainability features including PV electricity production and rainwater harvesting. The design of the garage to support electric vehicles will encourage EV usage across the City, reducing local emissions and improving air quality.



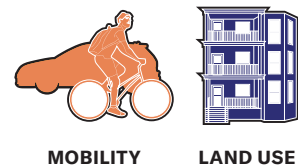
Figure 9. Electric charging stations provide great incentives for increased retail activity, as car charging can take anywhere from 20 minutes to a few hours.

COORDINATE MOBILITY & DEVELOPMENT

AA.2.3 SIMPLIFY THE RESIDENTIAL PARKING PROGRAM.

Simplifying the residential parking program will improve the user experience and provide adequate measures for future growth, like the Green Line Expansion and the increase in electric vehicles. Medford's existing residential parking permit system is difficult to understand and manage, for both residents and those who take on the administrative and management responsibilities. Currently, curbside parking in residential neighborhoods is in high demand, and not actively managed to

distribute this demand and accommodate for visitors, day workers, and new development. Pursuing a zoned-based approach and adjusting permit regulations, restrictions, and permit database can help the City simplify and manage the program and create a more easily understandable set of regulations for residents. The following section provides detailed strategies on how to streamline the City's parking permit system, particularly for residents.



AA.2.3.1

Pilot installation of EV charging stations curbside in residential areas.

As electric vehicles become more common, there is a growing need for EV charging stations in residential areas, especially on streets where homes do not have driveways. Adding curbside charging stations would lessen the burden to purchasing an EV for residents, helping to speed the EV transition, and reducing local emissions. Visible EV chargers in public areas also

serve as an inspiration for others to make the transition, which may convince residents that an electric vehicle can fit into their lifestyle. A pilot program focused on dense residential neighborhoods will test out different methods of charging infrastructure, means of sharing across multiple vehicles, and costs of electricity.

AA.2.3.2

Create a zoned parking program by neighborhood with permits for on-street parking. (Create specific regulations by neighborhood based on the prevalence of driveways, proximity to transit, and impact of unaccepted roadways. Ensure there is a nominal cost for on-street parking permits, and a mechanism for visitor passes.)

The City of Medford will benefit from an updated residential street parking system that is equitable, easy to understand, and comprehensive. Creating a zoned parking program by neighborhood with permits for on-street parking is a solution that will create the most balanced parking approach for each neighborhood. Each zone's regulations (such as the length of time a vehicle is permitted to park) will be based

on the availability of driveways, proximity to transit, and impact of unaccepted roadways on overall curbside space. There will be a nominal cost for on-street parking permits, and a system for visitor passes within each zone. Such a program should be implemented first in South Medford near the coming Green Line Extension stations to prevent commuter parking from affecting those neighborhoods.



Figure 10. Boston, a zoned parking program is enforced through clear and consistent signage and regular enforcement.

SUPPORT AN IMPROVED EXPERIENCE FOR ALL METHODS AND LEVELS OF MOBILITY

AA.3.1 IMPROVE THE PEDESTRIAN & BIKING EXPERIENCE.

Improving the pedestrian and biking experience for those within the City of Medford will contribute to greater safety, an increase in sustainable transportation, and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure. Moving forward, it is vital that the City implements strategic solutions that better connect commuters to Medford Square and Boston and implement solutions that target gaps within the pedestrian and bicycle networks.

Although Medford has a strong Complete Streets policy that identifies the need to redesign roadways to balance all user needs and increase walkability across the roadway system, there is room for improvement to identify key areas for investment as well as implement quick-hit solutions to create a

more connected and accessible environment for those who walk and bike. Past planning efforts target systemwide improvements for the bicycle and pedestrian network, however there is a need to focus capital projects on connecting neighborhood streets to the system, integrating equity into decision-making, developing an implementation plan that defines quick-build solutions, and incorporating new technology into the walking and biking environment. The following action items provide an overview of key strategies to enhance the pedestrian and bicycle experience within Medford's mobility network.

"Please prioritize pedestrians and bike riders as much as cars!"
Comment Card



MOBILITY

AA.3.1.1

Perform an audit of pedestrian crossings and school-adjacent pedestrian routes for safe crossings.

"I have to cross many roads without crosswalks when I walk my kids to school."
Public Meeting No. 1

Ensuring routes to school are safe and convenient encourages walking, which increases the impact of neighborhood schools, creating

a sense of community. Reducing school-bound roadway congestion has impacts City-wide during key commuting hours and promotes healthy lifestyles and active uses of the neighborhoods by students.

AA.3.1.2

Create an equity-driven city-wide sidewalk rehabilitation/creation plan to achieve a sidewalk on every street by 2050.

Over the past five years, the City has dedicated funding and resources to developing comprehensive assessments and analyzing sidewalk conditions at a Citywide level to increase connectivity and accessibility. Complete Streets capital projects, the 2020 Rapid Recovery Program Plan, and the recent 2021 Pedestrian Accessibility Study highlighted the need for pedestrian-scale improvements at key locations including Main Street, Medford Square, Winthrop Circle, and Salem Street, with particular emphasis on areas of high commercial and economic activity. The Pedestrian Accessibility Study took a more data-driven approach by undertaking a detailed inventory and assessment of the 190-miles of sidewalk. This assessment considered sidewalk material type, visual ratings, width, curb reveal, type, and condition, as well as ramp material, slope, and type, and crosswalk presence, alignment, and condition.

From an equity standpoint, the 2021 assessment methodology integrated proximity to schools, transit stops/stations, business districts, recreational areas, and other high use facilities such as churches and civic buildings. The final output displayed a visualization of low to high priority sidewalks across the entire network, with a particular need for improvements along Route 60/Pleasant Street, Main Street, and Boston Avenue.

The City should continue the momentum of enhancing connectivity by creating a detailed prioritization plan for sidewalk and crosswalk capital improvements, which can build off the existing sidewalk audit by adding Right-of-Way limitations, Environmental Justice Communities overlay, socioeconomic census data by zone, safety considerations, vehicle speeds, pedestrian movements, and integration with other modes.

AA.3.1.3

Add Blue Bike Stations and bicycle repair stations at key destinations.

Improving access to sustainable modes of travel across the City extends to the realm of bikeshare. Working with BlueBikes to bring the service into the City (along with

neighboring towns) will improve connectivity by adding another shared option for those choosing an active mode of transportation.

AA.3.1.4 Prioritize quick-build fixes for dangerous pedestrian areas.

Intersections and roadways that are dangerous for pedestrians can be addressed through strategic tactical and permanent improvements. Quick-build improvements focus on making scalable changes that do not require significant investment or construction, such as flex-posts, temporary paint and pavement markings, and new directional, safety, and identification signage for those who walk and bike. Solutions like these can help shorten crossings, calm traffic, and improve visibility for more vulnerable modes.

Past planning efforts, road safety audits, and complete streets policies have highlighted the need to invest in improved pedestrian bicycle infrastructure particularly in critical areas of high demand such as Boston Avenue, Forest Street, High Street,

Mystic Valley Parkway, and the Main Street corridor. Regional programs including MassDOT's Shared Streets and Spaces Program can give the City the opportunity to address safety and connectivity for those who bike and walk, considering these programs prioritize projects that promote speed management, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure installations, and Main Streets activation efforts. It is critical that the City coordinate and involve the public and key stakeholders throughout the location selection process and preliminary design phase to create improvements that address key safety, connectivity, and accessibility issues.

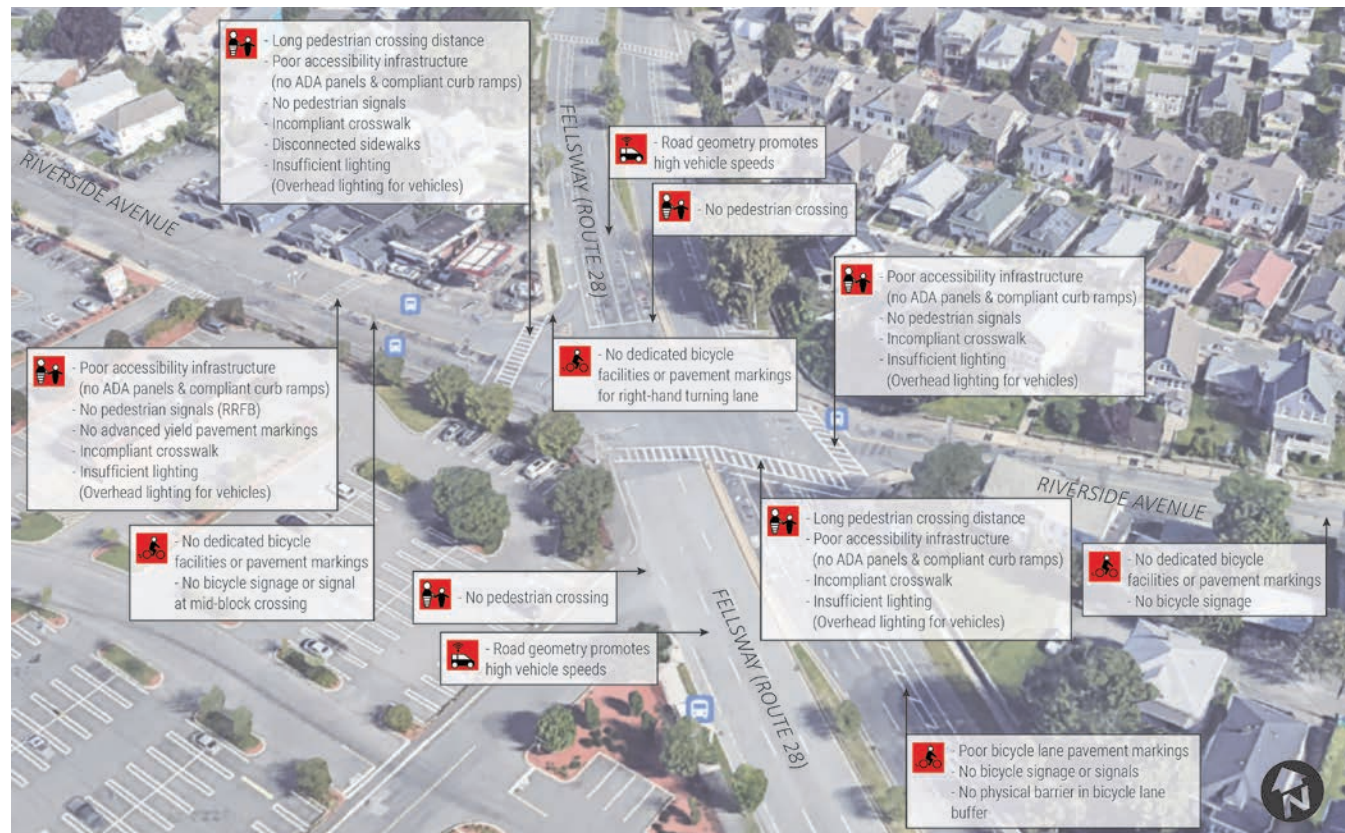
The intersection of the Fellsway and Riverside Avenue serves as a vital intersection in the City of Medford. Sitting

at the node between dense residential neighborhoods and a major shopping center, it provides a quick route for those traveling to neighboring communities, the Wellington residential areas, commercial uses at Fellsway Plaza, and the transit hub at Wellington Station. Four MBTA routes (the 100, 108, 134, and 710) run along the Fellsway and intersect at Riverside Avenue, as there are up to six bus stops within a quarter-mile radius of the intersection. The adjacent Fellsway Plaza has numerous vital local businesses, and industrial uses also bring heavy trucks to the area. The 2019 Road Safety Audit reported 30 crashes from 2014-2016, 13% of which involved pedestrians. The existing road geometry promotes high speeds, leaving much to be desired for pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

Although crosswalks exist at Riverside Avenue and the southern portion of the Fellsway, significant enhancements need to be made to shorten crossing distances, improve accessibility, provide lighting during night hours, and dedicate signal phasing for those who walk and bike. Tactical and easily implementable solutions can be applied to decrease lane widths in order to slow drivers, create curb extensions with paint, bollards or planters, remove on-street parking for improved site distances, upgrade crosswalks to national standards, and implement temporary ADA ramps and detectable panels. Figure 11 below highlights key problem areas and issues within the Fellsway & Riverside Avenue intersection.

Figure 11. Fellsway (Route 28) and Riverside Avenue Intersection: Mobility Issues

Figure 12. Fellsway (Route 28) and Riverside Avenue Intersection: Mobility Opportunities



AA.3.1.5 Prioritize and implement recommendations from the 2016 Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan to create safer bike lanes, more bike parking and off-street bike paths that link to regional bike paths.

Implementing the recommendations from the 2016 Bicycle Infrastructure Master Plan in addition to newer recommendations will improve the cyclability and connectivity across the City of Medford. Getting residents out of vehicles will make roadways safer and reduce local air pollution. Improvements associated with the Master Plan will also induce new bicycle trips, opening up the City to those who have not benefitted from local places. The Master Plan includes projects such as adding bike lanes along Boston Avenue to connect Medford and Somerville and the future Green Line Extension, bike lanes along High Street to connect Medford to Arlington and provide an east-west connection, and bike lanes along Mystic Avenue to improve safety.

AA.3.1.6 Develop and implement consistent signage and street markings for shared streets.

Developing consistent signage and street markings will alert motorists that cyclists and pedestrians may be within the roadway – a key safety element. Shared streets are those where the curb to curb space can be utilized by cars, bicycles and pedestrians, creating a unique space that encourages community. Shared streets can be used for many different purposes, such as outdoor dining, plazas, events and others. Permanently shared streets across Medford will encourage slow movement of vehicles, and allow for communities to blossom.

AA.3.1.7 Apply universal design principles to ensure existing and future parks and trails are accessible to all regardless of age or ability.

Universal design refers to designs that accommodate and support the widest range of potential users. Universal design should be comprehensive, such that it results in seamless mobility for all users, those with disabilities but also those who are pushing a stroller, carrying a package, or someone of short or tall stature. Infrastructure assets such as lighting, sidewalks, crosswalks, wayfinding signage, curb ramps, ADA detectable panels, crossing signals, and seating within and connecting to existing parks and trails in Medford should be inventoried and assessed to better understand accessibility and connectivity gaps. Managing these assets can help the City prioritize accessibility investments to create more welcoming and accommodating public and recreational spaces.

“We need to make sure that facilities, meetings, city events are accessible to everyone. We need universal design!”
Public Workshop No.2

AA.3.1.8 Update bicycle and motor vehicle parking requirements.

Medford’s existing parking and multimodal zoning provisions promote a vehicle-oriented environment. To reduce Single-Occupancy Vehicle (SOV) parking, the City should review and update their parking requirements to not only decrease the built parking environment but reduce barriers to development. Currently, the City imposes a parking minimum by use for developers based on a certain square footage, which typically are higher than typical national standards and similar-sized suburban communities. Instead, Medford should consider restructuring their parking requirements by implementing a parking maximum, which can incentivize developers to rely on and build accommodations for other modes.

Shared parking is another strategy to unlock inaccessible, private, and underutilized off-street parking facilities. By establishing and/or formalizing a shared parking program, developers (particularly those building in denser areas within the City), can access parking during peak and off-peak hours based on the associated use’s

typical parking demand profile. Shared parking provisions should be simple for developers to understand, provide precedent shared parking agreements for developers to reference, utilize an easily understandable parking demand calculation (similar to Somerville’s parking requirement calculation), and establish an average walking distance between the development and the proposed shared parking facility. In-lieu fee programs provided and resourced by the City can help create an incentive for private parking owners to integrate their parking facility into a shared parking program.

In terms of bicycle parking requirements, developers should be incentivized to implement infrastructure that accommodates different modes and promotes biking and transit-commuting alternatives. The City should revise zoning provisions to require bicycle parking for multi-family and commercial developments and require that it be placed in convenient locations for cyclists.



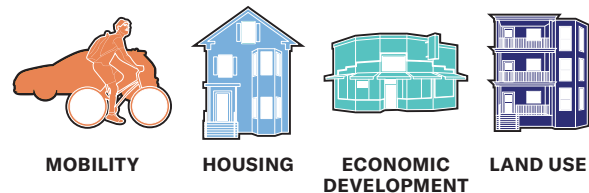
Figure 13. Bike facilities promote more bike activity and reduces vehicle congestion and parking demands.

SUPPORT IMPROVED EXPERIENCE FOR ALL METHODS & LEVELS OF MOBILITY

AA.3.2 CREATE A BEST-IN-CLASS TRANSIT EXPERIENCE TO SERVICE EXISTING AND NEW DEVELOPMENT.

With the increasing transit network across the Greater Boston Region, there is a demand for reliable and accessible transit services, especially for those visiting, commuting to/from, and living in Medford. Advocation to regional transit agencies is critical for Medford as development increases across the City and light-rail services expand across the region. The City should also assess all bus and transit stops within the internal network,

as targeted and quick-build improvements drastically increase rider safety, accessibility, and connectivity to their home, place of employment, or commercial centers. The following section provides information on key strategies to address transit connectivity in Medford and enhance the transit experience for existing riders and future development.



AA.3.2.1

Partner to create a Medford Square bus hub for seamless, comfortable, safe, and coordinated transfers.

Creating a central bus depot location in Medford Square will improve transfers and centralize the bus network within the City of Medford. Coordinated transfers will allow for faster travel across the MBTA system. Currently, bus access can be confusing and uncomfortable within the Square, with different routes stopping at different

locations, and limited amenities for riders. Creating a safe, accessible, comfortable centralized hub will improve conditions for existing riders and entice new bus riders by making the system more approachable. This will have additional benefits of eliminating cars from local roadways and increasing foot traffic within the Square.

AA.3.2.2

Advocate for additional bus service by the MBTA, including connections to the Green Line Extension, Orange Line, and downtown Boston; coverage linking Medford Square to all City neighborhoods; and crosstown service from Malden to Arlington.

*“Decrease MBTA wait times, specifically bus wait times.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 5*

Improving MBTA bus service will improve the livability of the City of Medford. New and increased bus service will result in increased ridership, removing cars from the roadway, and decreasing congestion, as well as making it easier to live car-free or car-lite lives within the City. However, the City does not control the

service to be provided by the MBTA. The MBTA is currently undertaking a significant investment in bus services and looking to coordinate and consolidate services to provide better, more frequent connections as part of the Better Bus Project. The City should advocate for additional resources in Medford and be prepared to contribute bus lanes at key locations to speed services and show commitment to the transit mode.

AA.3.2.3

Explore providing expanded local bus service via a local provider.

Outside of MBTA service, the City could engage a private operator to provide additional services to address key transit gaps. This would provide local service within the City of Medford and provide greater connectivity locally, such as to hospitals, medical centers, Medford Square, and nearby schools and shopping centers. Other communities have partnered to provide such service on an on-demand basis, such as

Newton’s NewMo service. As MBTA buses cannot reach every corner of Medford, and do not have the ridership or budget to do so, a circulator may aid in local trips (such as to a supermarket or hospital). This can also help make the case to the MBTA to provide additional resources within the community if the success of locally provided service is well-established.

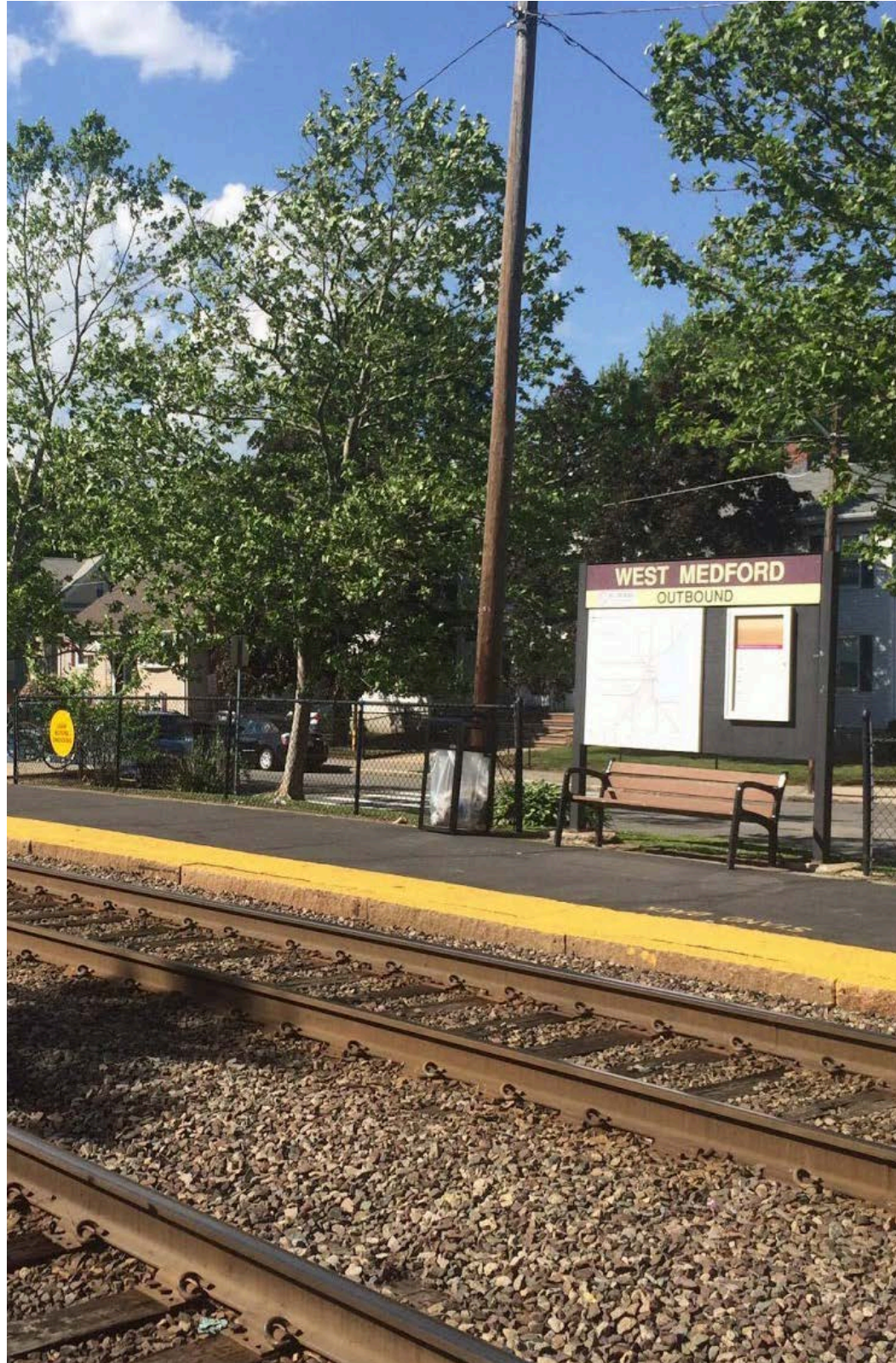


Figure 14. The West Medford station is currently in need of universal accessibility updates for persons with physical, hearing, and visual impairments.

AA.3.2.4

Request the MBTA undertake a design process to make West Medford Station accessible to people with disabilities and better integrated into the surrounding community.

*“West Medford Station is not accessible to those with disabilities.”
Public Meeting No. 2*

For West Medford Station to be well-utilized it must be accessible to all users, easily accessible, and well connected to the surrounding neighborhoods. Ensuring the station is redesigned with universal design concepts will not only help transit riders with disabilities and access needs, but also help those pushing strollers or cyclists who

need to bring bicycles or scooters on board.

A better integrated station will draw more riders, shortening commutes into Boston and relieving local road congestion. The City needs to continue to advocate with the MBTA to get West Medford Station design and construction included on annual capital spending plans to progress this project forward.

AA.3.2.5

Review the MBTA’s bus stop inventory to prioritize sidewalk and crosswalk improvements.

It is important that bus stops are accessible and that adjacent and connecting sidewalks are in good condition. Prioritizing sidewalk improvements near bus stops will improve the walkability of the area and transportation experience for riders. Crosswalk improvements will improve pedestrian safety, connectivity, and accessibility. Safer and more accessible sidewalks will make bus access easier and create a more pleasant experience for longer walks. The MBTA has already undertaken a comprehensive overview of

bus stop access (The Path to Accessible Transit Infrastructure). PATI identifies which stops need accessibility improvements to meet MBTA standards. As of 2021, 26 out of 200 bus stops in Medford were rated as high priority, meaning each of these stops has two or more significant access barriers (anywhere within or between the stop and the nearest roadway crossing). More significantly, 164 out of 200 stops are ranked as medium priority, meaning these stops had one significant barrier in access.

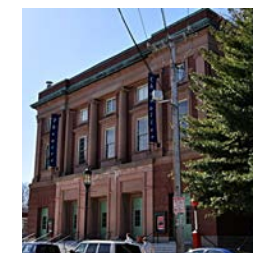
VIBRANT PLACES

Vibrant Places envisions a holistic place-based approach to strengthen Medford's economic base, which brings in \$4 billion annually, while capitalizing on each neighborhood's individual identity and needs. Medford's net outflow is about \$266 million, indicating that the city should expand opportunities for Medford residents to spend their dollars locally. Investing in and marketing small businesses and MBWE businesses, workforce development, main streets, and heritage tourism, will revitalize commercial cores, catalyze future economic development, and support entrepreneurs.

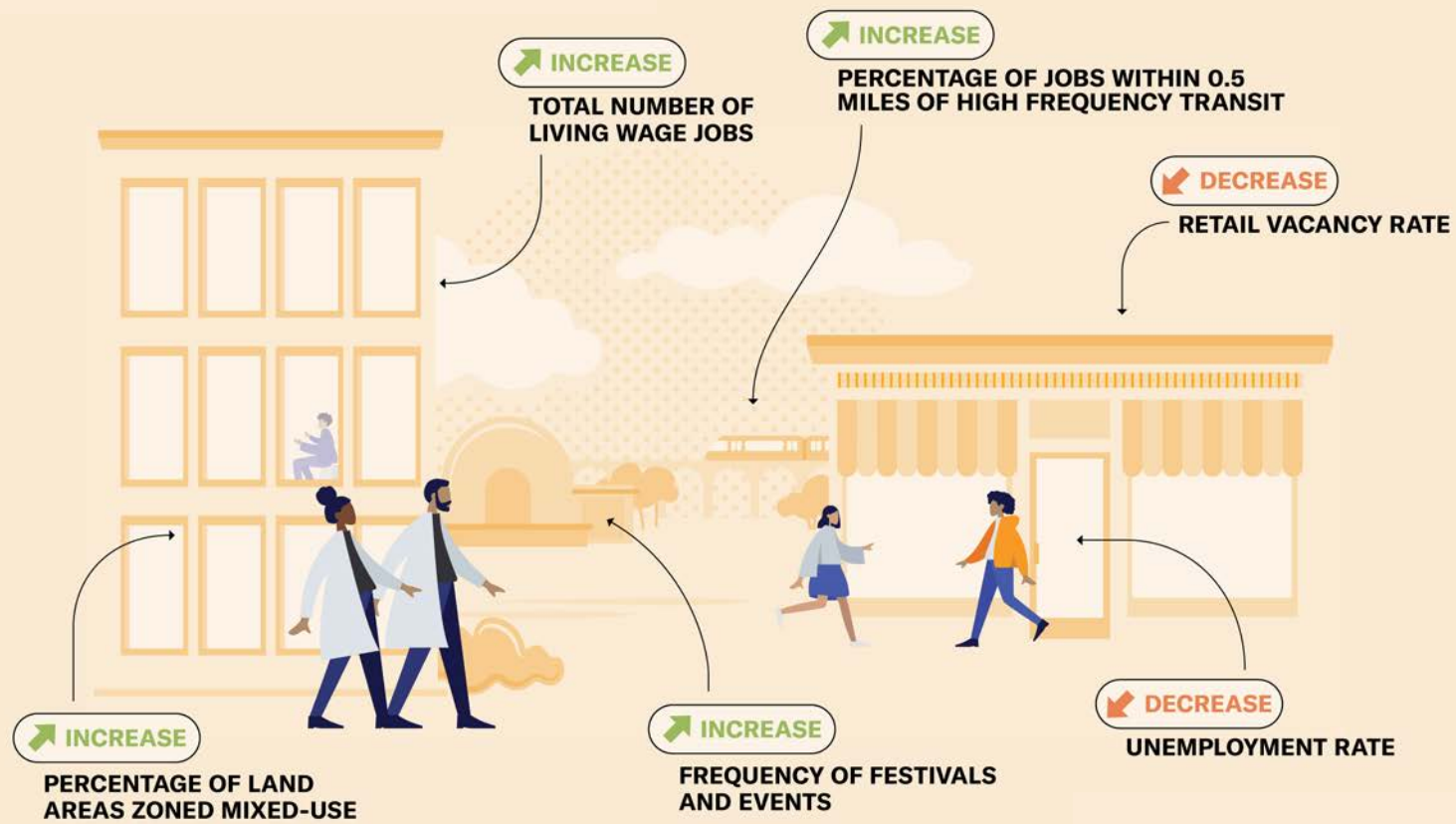
Currently, prospective economic development is limited by restrictive regulations on land use and new construction. Commercial land (all subcategories) accounts for 5% of all land in Medford and 7% of total assessed value, after residential, at 35% of all land and 85% of total assessed value. Many residents lamented that the riverfront is underdeveloped and stated that they would like to see investment to connect it more prominently to the rest of

the city. The city should revise the zoning code to promote mixed-use development along economic corridors and centers, such as Historic Medford Square, and balance the needs of economic development and residential growth. The city's transit stops present unique opportunities for activation, as they act as gateways into Medford from neighboring communities.

Of Medford residents, 92% work outside of the city, with nearly half of that amount, 49% working in Boston. Conversely, 88% of Medford's workforce does not live in the city. Medford is anchored by prominent institutions, most notably Tufts University, as reflected in the city's employment data—the highest shares of the workforce are in health care, science, and education. These community connections can be transformed into partnerships with the city that promote educational opportunities and workforce development.



VIBRANT PLACES BENCHMARKS



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CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.1 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW AMENITIES IN MEDFORD'S BUSINESS DISTRICTS

Medford's eight business districts are key areas to develop 12- and 18-hour communities. Walkability, multimodal transit connectivity, and mixed use development can facilitate accessible job opportunities across many sectors and attract new commercial and recreational amenities. Meanwhile, a diverse and affordable housing stock can ensure

equitable residential options for all residents. Through careful land use and development practices, these districts can blend these elements to allow residents, employees, and visitors in these districts to access strong jobs, attractive recreational amenities, and high-quality housing.

*“Incubation space allows entrepreneurs to test out their business, establish their brand, then figure out what to do after.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 3*



Figure 1. The 12- and 18- hour communities approach activates city centers and promotes economic development.



VP.1.1.1

Undertake corridor or commercial center studies to allow an appropriate mix of uses and land use controls for cohesive development along corridors and within village centers.

Corridors and commercial centers that offer a balanced mix of uses are key to facilitating cohesive development and creating districts that facilitate 12- and 18-hour activity. Studies into these areas can identify this appropriate mix of uses and land use controls. Near term study priorities should

include the Mystic Valley Parkway corridor and Medford Square, where there is ample opportunity for high-impact development. Neighborhood plans in each district should be pursued to identify and recommend development and land use strategies based on existing assets and opportunities.

VP.1.1.2

Rezone to allow mixed-use in “village centers” as-of-right in smaller nodes outside the traditional commercial squares, such as Salem Street.

Medford has traditional centers of commercial activity, such as Medford Square and West Medford Square, and corridors along which commercial and industrial activity is mixed with other uses. Mystic Avenue and, to a lesser extent, Salem Street are examples of this pattern of development. However, there are non-conforming uses scattered within the primarily residential districts that are likely remnants of commercial uses established before the zoning ordinance was adopted.

Smaller crossroads, such as the intersection of Spring Street, Magoun Avenue, and Gibson Street may have room for only a few neighborhood-based businesses. One way to support these smaller crossroads is to create a zoning mechanism to address the non-conforming use and, depending on the characteristics of the abutting properties, perhaps allow an additional floor or two. This corner has a single-story commercial building and an empty lot used for parking; the abutting residential uses are mostly two-and-a-half stories and single- or two-family structures.

Crossroads are good places to consider for introducing a mix of uses. The intensity and variety of those uses would depend on the existing conditions and neighboring uses. For example, where Salem Street and the Fellsway is an example of a large crossroads that already accommodates many uses and could add more intense uses over time, as zoning changes and market demand interact.

Zoning changes to address these small commercial nodes or corners could create incentives to invest in the buildings and increase space available for local neighborhood-supporting businesses without major negative impacts on the existing neighborhood.

VP.1.1.3

Partner with developers to attract mixed-use development in underutilized sites in Medford's business districts.

Many vacant and underdeveloped sites in Medford's business districts like Medford Square and West Medford offer strong opportunities to attract development and strengthen these districts as mixed use

communities. Partnerships with developers, including nonprofits and MWBEs, are an efficient and effective way to identify these sites and create appropriate development plans.



VP.1.1.4

Rezone appropriate emerging corridors, such as Mystic Avenue and Mystic Valley Parkway, to create zoning responsive to the desired land uses for each corridor.

“For areas where there will be more development, make sure streets are welcoming (Mystic Avenue). They go hand in hand.”
 Steering Committee Meeting No. 3

“So much potential for rezoning on Mystic Avenue.”
 Public Workshop No. 1

Figure 2. The rezoning of Mystic Avenue and the Mystic Valley Parkway would allow for land uses that support new investment in emerging industries and catalyze future economic development.

Mystic Avenue and Wellington/Mystic Valley Parkway are areas with a variety of uses but very different development patterns and characteristics.

Mystic Avenue is a long corridor with a variety of building and parcel sizes. One side abuts a residential neighborhood; the other backs onto the Mystic Valley Parkway and I-93. These two roads create a significant barrier between Mystic Avenue and the Mystic River which gave the corridor its name. There is no formal access to the river between Main Street and Shore Drive. There is a pedestrian crosswalk on Mystic Valley Parkway as it crosses the river, but there does not appear to be an outlet under I-93 to Mystic Avenue.

Mystic Avenue was the subject of a rezoning study in 2018. Community support at the time included mixed-use that would add residential, including affordable housing, to a variety of uses – restaurant, retail, hotel, maker spaces, outdoor dining, food production. Some participants did not support, housing, however. The proposed zoning options divided the corridor into geographic zones that would govern the type and intensity of land uses. Since 2018, the changing relationship between home and work, the desire to have more outdoor gathering spaces, and the need for daily goods and services within a walk or easy bicycle ride have become more frequent topics as a result of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The City should revisit the 2018 study, taking into account public comments during the engagement process for this plan. One outcome could

be the revision of the original draft zoning; a second outcome might be to launch a new study, perhaps parallel to the study for the

Wellington/Mystic Valley Parkway area. The Wellington/Mystic Valley Parkway area has much larger parcels and a mix of industrial uses and large-scale retail. Relatively recent investment at River’s Edge, along the Malden River and the location of the Wellington Orange line stop (which also acts as a bus connector) provide a different set of physical, transit, and economic circumstances from Mystic Avenue. The larger parcel sizes and public transit connections to the other Orange line communities indicate an opportunity to focus on job creation and retention. Abutting mostly neighborhoods provide a unique opportunity to consider strategies to attract jobs for nearby residents, perhaps combined with some of the workforce training strategies described elsewhere in this plan. Emerging industries such as life science manufacturing and the green energy industry may be candidates for the land development patterns in this area. The City should create a neighborhood plan specific to this area and include representatives from a wide range of industries to discuss their needs for space, employees, and amenities attractive to those employees. The area is already being targeted for development; this is an ideal time to incorporate regulatory changes to encourage desired uses. Other outcomes from that planning process may include public infrastructure improvements to leverage new investment for existing residents and establish better connections to the rest of the city.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

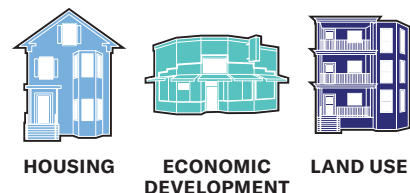
VP.1.2 MAKE DEVELOPMENT & REGULATIONS CONSISTENT WITH THIS PLAN'S VISION FOR LAND USE

A comprehensive plan sets goals for the entire city at a high-level – the 50,000-foot view. Neighborhood plans fill in the details as at the level of the neighborhood or area. As part of the planning process, the City evaluated options for four specific areas of the city: West Medford Square, Medford Square, Mystic Avenue, and Mystic Valley Parkway. Each of these areas has a different mix of land uses, regulatory controls, and expectations from the community for future uses. This comprehensive plan recommends that each of these neighborhoods receives additional attention in terms of community planning, with the community feedback from this planning process providing direction for these studies.

West Medford Square
Medford Square
Mystic Avenue
Mystic Valley Parkway

The City recently underwent a recodification process that reorganized the zoning code, ensured references were consistent, and introduced some best practices in terms of standard provisions. However, once this comprehensive plan is approved, the City will need to adjust the zoning to match the recommendations of this plan and any succeeding neighborhood plans. The City's Zoning Ordinance must be responsive to the comprehensive plan. Section 81D of the Massachusetts General Laws, which is the enabling legislation for master plans in this state, notes that the plan is the "basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the municipality."

Components of the plan which will not have been addressed by the recodification include the actions below. Other recommendations for the zoning can be found throughout this document. For a full discussion of zoning, please see the Implementation section.



VP.1.2.1

Balance as-of-right uses with appropriate land use controls.

If written correctly, design and/or development standards can be administratively approved, with waiver requests or unusual situations handled by

the Community Development Board. This speeds the process for as-of-right uses while allowing community control over the development through quantifiable standards.

VP.1.2.2

Address inconsistencies between current and past land use and the current zoning ordinance.

A review of the land use map and the zoning map indicates areas of nonconforming uses, some of which are addressed elsewhere within this plan. Certain areas should be rezoned to meet new goals defined by this comprehensive plan with a more specific neighborhood planning process for the areas defined above. For current zoning

districts that are primarily residential, the zoning ordinance should create a process for addressing existing nonconforming, but desired, uses and existing nonconforming buildings that are deteriorating from a lack of investment. Some strategies for this have been described in 4.1.1.



Figure 3. Adapting current land use regulations to this plan's vision provides the regulatory power necessary to move implementation forward in support of the creation of housing and local businesses.

VP.1.2.3

Review process for site plan/special permit approval and consider whether the process can be streamlined.

Changing the uses and dimensional standards in zoning districts is not always enough to encourage new investment, The City should review its current application

and permitting processes and consider options to reduce the amount of time necessary for approval. The City has several options, including:

- Pre-application meetings with relevant City staff
- Moving some uses from special permit or variance to site plan review or as-of-right, with design and development controls
- Establishing a Design Review Board to provide advisory guidance to the Community Development Board on design matters, guided by a set of published design guidelines
- Joint review meetings where more than one board or committee is involved in the review of complex projects.

VP.1.2.4

Communicate with residents about development economics.

Community inclusion is a crucial element of development projects, especially those that are incentivized by public funds. However, processes and regulations related to development financing can be complex and challenging to follow. As future development plans and projects are created, the City should create clear and informative ways to communicate with residents about economic funding sources and potential impacts.

Strategies may include public meetings, infographics and handouts, websites, and other communication methods that meet the needs of residents. Accessibility should be prioritized in these communications – for example, making them available in commonly spoken non-English languages, and ensuring that digital communications can be read using a screen-reader.



Figure 4. Actions to make the economic development process more accessible will help catalyze small business investment in Medford.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

**VP.1.3
CREATE EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE CHANGES ARE INCLUSIVE & BENEFICIAL TO ALL.**

Medford has strong real estate development patterns in both the commercial and residential sectors. Ongoing and proposed projects of both types are already bringing new businesses, jobs, and homes to Medford. Meanwhile, future initiatives to attract appropriate and measured growth will likely bring new development to the city in the years to come. These developments are capable of bringing increased economic opportunities and high-quality housing and infrastructure to the existing

Medford community. However, without proper oversight, these benefits may not be accessible to vulnerable populations like low-income households and small businesses, who may instead face increased risks of displacement and competition. As these developments emerge, it is important for the City to take meaningful steps to ensure that the many benefits of housing and economic development are equitably distributed across Medford’s people and places.

*“Proactively recruit mission driven developers for mixed income and lower income housing.”
Public Workshop No. 2*



VP.1.3.1

Develop a toolkit to prevent displacement as a result of investment that increases housing costs and/or commercial rents.

As new residential and commercial developments are created across Medford, rising costs for existing tenants and homeowners create displacement risks. Prior to the pandemic, commercial rents for office and industrial spaces were both rising more quickly in Medford than regional averages. Housing affordability is also a priority, as recent increases in both rents and home values have made housing of both typologies more expensive than the median Medford resident can afford.

The City should work with local residents and businesses, as well as members of the real estate industry, to develop a comprehensive toolkit to ensure that future housing and economic development efforts do not increase displacement risks for existing communities. This toolkit

may include affordable development incentives, assistance programs for cost-burdened residents and businesses, legal protections against displacement, and/or other initiatives based on local need and subject matter expertise. Existing resources such as the Medford Housing Authority should be utilized to develop and implement the strategies in this toolkit. Innovative best practices from other cities should be considered, such as the use of prefabricated housing and accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to create affordable housing units at a low development cost to the City. (For more information on ADUs in Medford, see page 189.) Resources for homeowners including funding opportunities and affordable homeownership-based development strategies should also be included in this toolkit.

VP.1.3.2

Develop resources for tenants to inform them of their rights and responsibilities.

Tenants of rental housing units have many rights and responsibilities under local, state, and federal law. These regulations can be complex, and some tenants may not be aware of all of their legal protections. The City should develop a resource kit for tenants that outlines legal rights and protections, responsibilities, best practices, and external support resources for tenants. Among other topics, these resources should

provide guidance on eviction processes, rental insurance, utilities and maintenance costs, and legal and financial support resources. This resource kit should be available in commonly spoken non-English languages, and made accessible both online and as a physically printed and distributed document.

VP.1.3.3

Review linkage requirements and fees and consider how to appropriately spread benefits from development.

Medford currently imposes linkage fees on developments that impact public facilities such as parks, roads, and water and sewer infrastructure. Funds gathered from these fees are earmarked for capital improvements to the impacted facilities. These fees are collected to ensure that projects bear the appropriate responsibility for capital improvements that are needed to support new development.

The City should conduct a formal assessment of these fees and requirements to ensure that their current structure effectively achieves this goal. Alterations

to the current breadth, fee calculations, funding allocation methods, and/or other requirements imposed by these fees should be made as necessary to ensure that new developments are providing the appropriate benefits to surrounding areas and facilities. New requirements and uses for linkage fees should be evaluated, such as parking and open space improvements tied to commercial developments. Medford's inclusionary housing ordinance may also be amended to include linkage requirements to collect fees that can be used to fund new affordable housing development.

Mitigation Fee Act: San Mateo, CA

The City of San Mateo has a robust and flexible set of impact fees that are used to finance a wide range of improvements. These fees are structured in three unique ways. Development impact fees are assessed to new developments of any use that disrupt the city's wastewater, sewer, transportation, or park infrastructure to mitigate any negative impacts. Linkage fees follow a similar structure but are used to address social needs that are indirectly related to development projects. For example, the City assesses linkage fees

to finance new childcare facilities and affordable housing units that are made necessary by new developments. Finally, the City has five in-lieu fees that are used to ensure that important amenities are created by new developments, either via direct construction by developers or increased municipal funding. These fees cover the creation of new parking, public art, tree planting, below-market rate housing, and parks. As of 2021, the City had more than a dozen ongoing improvement projects directly funded by these various fees.

VP.1.1.4

Consider opportunities for development to improve the public realm through public space, landscaping and trees, and public art.

The public realm includes the public streetscape and public land, but also private land and buildings visible from a public right-of-way. Development standards or design guidelines should establish requirements for improving the public realm tied to specific review thresholds and land uses. These guidelines should include, but not be limited to, the provision of street trees and other plantings, low-impact design

of landscaping and stormwater treatments, appropriate street furnishings that link the public space to privately owned but publicly accessible space (POPS), and strategic, low-impact lighting. These standards should be neighborhood or area-specific (following the model of Gateways, Centers & Squares, Corridors, and Neighborhood Centers mentioned earlier).

Figure 5. Also see connected recommendation in VP.1.6.3.

VP.1.3.5

Assess new funding mechanisms to support development in Medford's business districts.

District-based funding models have been successfully implemented by many municipalities to facilitate targeted development strategies. Three mechanisms in particular are encouraged by the Massachusetts Office of Housing and Community Development:

- Business improvement districts (BID) are one such model in which a special assessment district is created that allows the City to offer services and developments above and beyond typical provisions. Typically, property owners within the BID are assessed a small special fee in exchange for new capital improvements, business development initiatives, events and cultural amenities, and other public services provided by the City.
- District improvement financing (DIF) initiatives establish a unique development program for the improvement district that is distinct from the rest of the city. Funding is generated through the posting of municipal bonds, which are used to finance new development projects and infrastructure improvements. As new improvements are made, the City assumes that property values will increase more rapidly within the district; new tax revenue generated from these increases are used to pay off the bonds over time.
- Tax increment financing (TIF) indirectly facilitates physical and economic development in a district by providing tax exemptions to property owners. These exemptions are time-bound and linked with required improvements, such as physical upgrades to buildings or new economic development programs. Property owners use the financial savings created by the tax exemption to directly finance these improvement projects.

The City should explore these funding mechanisms in Medford's business districts to evaluate opportunities to facilitate new development strategies. Where applicable, these programs should be incorporated into neighborhood plans.

“As a community we should make it easier to form businesses, create development meeting variety of needs”
Public Workshop No. 2



Figure 6. Business improvements can range from beautification efforts to larger capital improvements and retail or branding efforts.

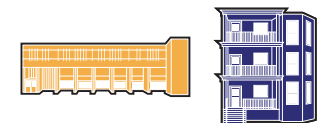
CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.4 INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESIDENTS WITHIN MEDFORD.

Medford is already home to many well-paying job opportunities. Industries like healthcare and education are among the city's largest employers, anchored by key institutions such as Lawrence Memorial Hospital and Tufts University. Medford has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the region and the state, reflecting a strong local economy and access to regional employment. However, many residents also face challenges to

accessing strong jobs, with 42% of households earning less than 80% of Area Median Income (AMI). Industries such as retail and manufacturing employ relatively fewer people in Medford than in the surrounding region. Efforts to create new job opportunities across emerging and diverse industries are essential to ensure all Medford residents have access to high-quality job opportunities.

“Leverage vocational school for small businesses and workforce development.”
Steering Committee No 3



PUBLIC SERVICES LAND USE

VP.1.4.1

Attract companies that provide well-paying jobs to residents and enable them to work in Medford.

Medford has many jobs in the public and non-profit sectors, outpacing regional employment in both areas. Based on these regional trends, private sector growth offers a strong opportunity for new job creation in Medford. Initiatives to attract new companies in multiple fields can entrench strong industries in Medford while simultaneously diversifying job options.

For example, the City can implement tax breaks for businesses in these sectors that move to Medford. The City should prioritize companies and industries that create jobs accessible to employees of various educational backgrounds. These efforts can improve employment access and financial stability for all residents.

VP.1.4.2

Create new educational and workforce development opportunities for local residents to prepare them for growing job sectors.

Medford offers many strong jobs in diverse sectors, and emerging fields like the life sciences industry create new opportunities for job growth. However, many of these established and growing industries require specific educational or technical backgrounds, and local residents do not always have access to the necessary educational and workforce development resources to meet such qualifications. As a result, most of Medford's jobs are filled by commuters from other communities, while residents often have to travel across the

region for work. Youth and adults with lower educational attainment are most heavily impacted. The City should work to create new educational and workforce development opportunities that support these industries, including allocating municipal funding and developing targeted workforce development programs. Partnerships with the Medford Public Schools and established institutions in Medford and across the region, such as Tufts University and MassHire, should also be developed to connect residents with existing resources.



Figure 7. Opportunities for youth workforce development can be implemented in collaboration with Medford Public Schools and Tufts.

VP.1.4.3

Update zoning code to create incentives for new types of industry that can mix with other land uses.

Industries like the life sciences sector have strong potential to advance economic and workforce development in Medford, but the current zoning code is a barrier to new development in these fields. For example, the hybrid office-lab spaces common in the life sciences industry are prohibited by regulations in both commercial

and industrial districts, preventing new companies from developing these spaces in Medford. Updates to the zoning code can remove such barriers in cases where existing zoning is incompatible with contemporary uses.

Industrial Rezoning: Montgomery County, MD

In 2009, Montgomery County, Maryland, amended their industrial zoning codes to allow for life science labs. Like Medford, Montgomery County sits just outside a city (Washington DC) with a significant life sciences market, but had little development in the industry. Since the rezoning, Montgomery County has grown into one of

the nation's leading life sciences markets due to a massive influx of lab space in newly-rezoned areas. The county's proximity to an existing talent pool and market, combined with the influx of new state-of-the-art lab spaces, continues to attract companies and provide high-quality jobs for residents.

“Use industrial zoning more creatively.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 2



Figure 8. Montgomery County, MD made changes to industrial zoning to allow for growth in the life sciences sector.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.5 LEVERAGE HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS, OPEN SPACE, AND RECREATION ASSETS AS ASSETS TO EMPLOYERS LOOKING TO ATTRACT EMPLOYEES WITH A DESIRE FOR A HIGHER QUALITY OF LIFE.

Employers who can offer their employees a high quality of life have a competitive advantage over those who cannot - and cities that understand this have a competitive advantage over their peers. Medford has significant resources that are attractive to employees including arts, history, culture, dining, recreation, an open space. However, the City and its partners could do a better job of leveraging those assets, particularly those related to arts, history and culture, to encourage employers to settle in Medford.

Part of the City's economic strategy should be to market the City's assets to those businesses that the City wants to attract. As noted earlier, the City wants employers who will provide living wages to the City's current residents or who will partner with the City to provide workforce training to those who do not currently have the required skills. Leveraging the quality of life components that employees seek is one way to effectively partner with those potential employers.



VP.1.5.1

Better integrate the Chevalier Theater with the economic and cultural life of the rest of the city. (ex. work with restaurant owners to provide pre- and post-show dinner reservations).

The Chevalier Theater is a significant cultural asset for the Medford community and draws attendees to its events from the larger region. However, interviews with members of Medford's arts, cultural, and historic community revealed that the theater is not as well-integrated into the economic activity of the community as it could be. Drawing people from beyond Medford increases the need for parking to support events at the theater; public transit to Medford Square, while available, is not sufficient to serve all patrons. This event-related parking demand reduces the amount of parking available for customers of other businesses in the area, without much direct benefit to other businesses in Medford Square. A coordinated economic strategy would create partnerships between the Chevalier Theater and local businesses. While the theater's website identifies local restaurants, a more direct marketing

program that linked events with special pre- and post-show menus would help other businesses reap the benefits from the theater's presence in the square. The City's parking lots serve as overflow parking; as a stakeholder in the theater's success, the city could facilitate conversations between the Chevalier Theater and local restaurants.

The Chevalier Theater displays posters of upcoming events on its principal façade. Between events, the theater could advertise other local events and attractions, as part of an ongoing partnership with other art and cultural organizations in Medford. With the right partnerships, the theater's website could offer more information about other events and resources in Medford, encouraging people to spend a day or a weekend exploring the City.

*"Great to have the theater and restaurants in Medford Square."
Public Meeting No. 2*



Figure 9. The Chevalier Theater is a vital arts and cultural anchor, but needs to be included in a clear economic development strategy moving forward.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.6 INCENTIVIZE REGULAR UPGRADES TO FACADES AND STOREFRONTS.

Commercial storefronts are central features of Medford's commercial districts and corridors. Facades shape the aesthetic definition of each district, creating unique local identities that complement and personalize Medford's broader historical character. For local businesses, effective signage and facades are among the most powerful tools to attract new customers. Efforts to construct, preserve, and

maintain storefronts are critical to the physical and economic development of Medford's business districts. Through programs to incentivize and regulate these projects, the City can play a key role in supporting small businesses and reinforcing the unique vibrancy of each district.



**ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

VP.1.6.1

Continue to promote and expand the City's new facade and storefront improvement program.

In November 2021, the City of Medford launched a new program to fund facade improvements for 10-15 local businesses each year. This is a valuable program for small businesses, many of which occupy storefronts in various states of disrepair but lack the capital to invest in the necessary upgrades and repairs. Improved storefronts

reduce maintenance costs for these businesses while also attracting a wider customer base. The City should continue to promote this program as a way to revitalize Medford's business districts and increase patronage of local small businesses. New funding options should also be explored to expand this program.

VP.1.6.2

Develop appropriate design guidelines for storefronts and signage that reinforce the unique identity of each commercial center.

Commercial storefront and signage design play a key role in defining the aesthetic identity of surrounding communities. While some design elements are consistent across Medford, others are unique to each commercial center and corridor. Design guidelines are a valuable tool for the City to ensure that new developments, historic preservation efforts, and facade improvements all reinforce these identities.

These guidelines should be tailored to each business district's character rather than universally applied across the city. The facade improvement program should be amended to incorporate appropriate guidelines in each district. Neighborhood plans should also define local design guidelines, especially in developing districts like Wellington and Mystic Avenue.

Figure 10. Design guidelines for facades and facade improvement grants keep business districts attractive and active.



CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.7 CREATE COMMERCIAL CENTERS THAT MEET RESIDENTS' SHOPPING NEEDS.

Medford's commercial centers and corridors form the core of economic activity and job growth across the city. Each district offers a unique set of amenities and businesses, catering to local needs and diversifying the city's business community at large. With additional programming and investment, the City can help advance these districts to create

vibrant hubs that closely meet residents' shopping needs. By ensuring that residents can meet a majority of these needs without traveling outside their neighborhood, these efforts will be critical steps towards producing vibrant mixed use communities in Medford.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VP.1.7.1

*"Destinations - events, history, shopping - leads to people shopping dining and staying in Medford."
Steering Committee Meeting 3*

Develop relationships with property owners and create a joint City/property owner marketing campaign to attract preferred businesses/business types.

Underutilized parcels may be nonconforming or not fully built out under existing zoning. Nonconforming parcels are those that do not meet the dimensional or use standards of the zoning. For example, a parcel may be 5,000 SF in a district with a 10,000 SF minimum. Underutilized parcels include lots used for surface parking, vacant lots, or lots with buildings significantly below the allowable building size.

These lots can contribute in different ways to the City's needs, based on their location and the proximity of other types of uses. For example, a undersized lot in a neighborhood could become a small single-family or two-family structure that is affordable by size and design while fitting into the existing

patterns of neighborhood development. An undersized lot in any district could be used as a small open space designed to capture and filter stormwater while providing a shaded seating bench or other seating area. Such a strategy would address both the impacts of climate change and the need for community interactions.

Larger underutilized lots in commercial or mixed-use districts could be developed to provide space for housing and/or jobs with guidelines to promote climate responsive design of both buildings and sites. City control of the sites allows for disposition in exchange for meeting community goals relative to use, design, and community benefits.

West End: St. Louis Park, MN

In 2004, the city of St. Louis Park, MN, a suburb of Minneapolis, sought to redevelop an underutilized district that contained several standalone low-rise buildings and a significant amount of surface parking. The City developed a relationship with Duke Realty, a local developer that had a strong vision for transforming the area into a denser mixed-use community. This public-private relationship led to the West End

development starting in 2008. The project included infill development on underutilized parcels, new underground parking lots, and additional infrastructure including new roads and utilities. The project added a variety of office, retail, and residential space totaling over 2 million total square feet, and prompted various subsequent development projects in the district as the area became more attractive to residents and visitors.



Figure 11. St. Louis Park in Minnesota revitalized its West End by increasing density and making the area home to mixed-use development.

VP.1.7.2

Attract grocery stores and restaurants to ensure equitable food access for all.

Access to affordable and healthy food options is a crucial element of the wellbeing of all Medford residents. The City should work with community leaders and experts to identify gaps in food access. Where these gaps exist, the City should develop criteria

to evaluate new restaurants and grocery stores based on their ability to meet this need and work to incentivize appropriate businesses to relocate to Medford.



Figure 12. Smaller, corner grocery stores fill a need in the community for accessible, healthy food.

VP.1.7.3

Develop a palette of streetscape materials and furniture for public improvements that is flexible enough to reinforce the identity of each center and present a consistent identity throughout the city.

A clear and well defined set of streetscape standards will help to create cohesive and interesting public space in Medford's squares. Additionally, streetscape standards help to promote a sense of place, identity and wayfinding, the arts, and universal accessibility. Signage and interpretive panels can communicate effectively, while

murals and other forms of public art are more creative platforms for storytelling. On a practical level, this contributes to positive user experience and navigation, but this is also a placemaking opportunity, a way to help people connect to the places they visit across the city and region.



Figure 13. Site furniture, such as the seating shown here in Cambridge, MA, provides flexible use and activates the city's public spaces for all to enjoy.

CREATE ACCESSIBLE 12- & 18-HOUR COMMUNITIES

VP.1.8 ALLEVIATE RESTRICTIONS ON LAND USE AND NEW CONSTRUCTION THAT CURRENTLY LIMIT DEVELOPER INVESTMENT.

Medford’s commercial centers and corridors form the core of economic activity and job growth across the city. Each district offers a unique set of amenities and businesses, catering to local needs and diversifying the city’s business community at large. With additional programming and investment, the City can help advance these districts to create

vibrant hubs that closely meet residents’ shopping needs. By ensuring that residents can meet a majority of these needs without traveling outside their neighborhood, these efforts will be critical steps towards producing vibrant mixed use communities in Medford.



VP.1.8.1

Reduce zoning barriers to multifamily and mixed-use housing development.

*“Update zoning to allow for more housing diversity.”
Public Meeting No. 3*

Medford currently has a “missing middle” typology of housing options. According to the Housing Production Plan, more than 60% of Medford residents live in single family homes or large buildings with ten or more housing units. Medium density developments with two to four units are underrepresented in Medford. However, these medium-density structures are highly effective at creating walkable, mixed use communities without significantly altering

neighborhood character. Units in this housing typology are useful for residents including families looking for their first home and temporary living options for college students. Zoning districts around commercial centers and corridors should also be amended to allow for mixed uses such as medium density residential buildings with ground floor storefronts or restaurants.

VP.1.8.2

Create development standards/design guidelines for new construction and significant rehabilitation/additions and tie them to a Design Review Board or design criteria/requirements to maintain consistency in the review process.

This process will need to be balanced with efforts to simplify or streamline permitting (VP.1.8.6)

New construction and rehabilitation or expansion projects in existing buildings are both important project typologies to advance physical and economic development across Medford. Building design plays a substantial role in defining neighborhood identities, and while this can be applied to improve local character, unregulated development can lead to inconsistent design that disrupts cohesive local identities. Development standards

and design guidelines defined by the City can be effective tools to ensure that future development projects, including new buildings as well as improvements to existing ones, will advance a consistent aesthetic attuned to local character. To oversee these regulations in a consistent manner, the City should create a central Design Review Board tasked with managing the review process or make use of a consistent peer review process.

VP.1.8.3

Reduce parking requirements where possible based on demand audits to allow for more flexible development proposals.

Also see 2022 Climate Action and Adaptation Plan

Parking is an important consideration for residents and businesses as new developments emerge across Medford. However, overly strict parking requirements can place unnecessary restrictions on developments and limit the quality of development proposals. The City should carefully review parking requirements for new developments across Medford,

especially in business districts and areas with high development potential. This analysis should be informed by local parking demand audits and consistent with goals in City plans such as the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan. Requirements should be reduced where possible based on these audits to create opportunities for more flexible development proposals.

VP.1.8.4

Update allowable uses under existing zoning codes, such as permitting life sciences and/or breweries and distilleries within commercial and industrial districts.

Recent changes to Medford’s zoning codes, such as the 2020 ordinance to allow for marijuana establishments in certain districts, have created new opportunities for economic growth in Medford by attracting uses that were formerly not permitted. Other emerging industries, such as life sciences research facilities, breweries, and distilleries have similarly been excluded from Medford’s

zoning ordinance. Recent growth in these sectors offers significant potential to create jobs, increase local spending, and grow economic opportunities for residents. The City should identify high-potential use categories such as these that are currently prohibited in the zoning ordinance and update zoning to attract these uses where appropriate.



Figure 14. *Dorchester Brewing in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston evolved to match the identity of its neighborhood*

VP.1.8.5

Create bonuses for density, height, parking waivers, etc. tied to community benefits related to energy efficiency, climate adaptation, active ground floor spaces, or other amenities. Consider a menu of options rather than strict requirements.

Development bonuses, such as additional density and height allowances and parking waivers, are effective ways to maximize the community benefits created by new developments. Projects that provide increased energy efficiency, climate adaptation, active ground floor and outdoor spaces, and/or other amenities are highly

desirable for residents and City leaders alike. The City should develop a menu of potential zoning bonuses for development projects that are linked with the provision of these amenities. A menu of incentives that developers can choose from offers greater flexibility and appeal than a strict set of requirements.

VP.1.8.6

Evaluate permitting and review process to reduce the time from application to approval.

For many developers, property owners, and businesses, a fast and simple permitting process can be the difference between a successful project and an unviable one. In addition to identifying opportunities for procedural streamlining of development projects (VP.1.2.3), the City should complete a review of its many permitting processes and requirements to ensure that they are as navigable and fast-moving as possible.

This may include removing certain requirements, combining or streamlining existing processes, and/or replacing current processes with alternative ones that are more efficient and accessible. For parts of the permitting process that remain, the City should create simple guides or checklists that elucidate the required steps and provide translations of application forms and guidance materials.

VP.1.8.7

Allow desired uses in specific areas as of right or with a reduced permitting process (ex. site plan review instead of a special permit and/or variance).

While certain development uses may require a formal review process such as a special permit or variance, uses that the City determines to be most desirable should be encouraged by reducing or eliminating permit requirements. As of right allowances in certain districts should be pursued where

appropriate for uses that are highly desirable and minimally disruptive. When as of right allowances are not feasible, the City should implement reduced permitting requirements, such as a site plan review instead of a full special permit or variance application.



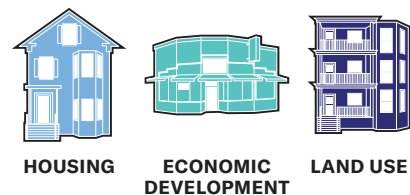
Figure 15. *A streamlined permitting and review process will move projects through more efficiently.*

ENCOURAGE BALANCED GROWTH

VP.2.1 ENABLE GROWTH THROUGH REGULATORY AND POLICY CHANGES.

The City can encourage new growth in two different ways: by addressing land uses and dimensional standards within the City's zoning ordinance and by streamlining the permitting process to allow for a shorter time from application to approval. The actions below allow for infill housing and commercial

in existing built areas, recommend changes to licensing requirements that are barriers to cultural activities, and suggest revising parking requirements to reduce parking, thus allowing more ground space for active indoor or outdoor uses (such as outdoor dining).



VP.2.1.1

Review and revise zoning and permitting processes to encourage appropriate development within neighborhoods, including small-scale neighborhood retail and services, and neighborhood/commercial center and comprehensive plan goals.

Small-scale stores and services already exist within Medford, and the ability to walk for daily errands is an important strategy for economic development, public health, and climate resiliency. Zoning that allows small

clusters of neighborhood commercial will help address daily needs while streamlining permitting processes is an important tool to attract and encourage small businesses.

See also VP.2.1.1.4

VP.2.1.2

Revise zoning to allow for redevelopment of non-conforming lots for smaller housing types in neighborhoods.

Many older New England neighborhoods were built prior to zoning, and the current minimum lot sizes may not match the actual neighborhood. The City should review the location of lots that are nonconforming because of size, and determine whether

those lots fit the profile of the existing neighborhood. If so, the City should develop a zoning ordinance to allow smaller-scale housing (1,500 SF or smaller) on non-conforming lots to address the need for varied housing typologies.

VP.2.1.3

Support small business and the arts by reviewing relevant policies, such as policies for liquor licenses, live music in restaurants, and food truck policies.

Members of the arts, historic, and cultural focus groups noted that the policies for liquor licenses, food trucks, and indoor live music were restrictive, limiting events that would otherwise be supportive of the arts.

“Clear and accessible zoning and permitting processes would be more welcoming for new businesses”

Steering Committee Meeting No. 3

VP.2.1.4

Review parking regulations for consistency with municipalities that have similar development patterns.

Best practices around parking regulations are shifting to allow lower parking ratios in areas with transit or site with parking management strategies. The City should evaluate its zoning against these changing requirements.

ENCOURAGE BALANCED GROWTH

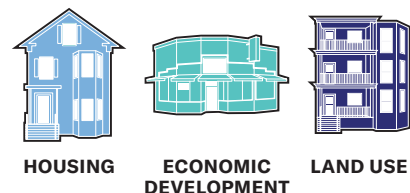
VP.2.2 DEVELOP UNDERUTILIZED PARCELS TO MEET SPECIFIC NEEDS, INCLUDING DIFFERENT HOUSING TYPES/AFFORDABILITY, COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND CLIMATE MITIGATION

Underutilized parcels fall into several categories. Some parcels may be vacant land, either because they were never developed or the original use has ceased. Others may be nonconforming lots under the current zoning and may not be able to be developed without a zoning change. Others may be in use now, but the use itself no longer conforms to the zoning. The ownership of such lots is important. The City should create a database of City-owned parcels, including those in tax title, and map that list to understand how the geographic location may influence the eventual use.

Nonconforming lots that are in use or whose use is no longer viable can be challenging to redevelop as the permitting and approval process may discourage new investment. For these parcel types, re-evaluating the applicable zoning may prompt a change to reduce the nonconformity (by changing the

relevant dimensional or use standard) or to create a process by which investment can occur without triggering the need for a variance.

Undeveloped lots present another set of opportunities; these could include one or more of the following: creating small pocket parks for neighborhoods underserved by local parks; addressing stormwater management by creating nature-based flooding mitigation; allowing smaller-scale housing on small lots to address the City's need for affordable housing; providing space for community gardens, or other gathering spots, or other neighborhood-specific spaces. In the City's commercial and industrial districts, vacant lots offer opportunities for new development with public benefits.



VP.2.2.1

Leverage centrally located City-owned sites to promote and develop multi-family residential properties.

As a land-owner, the City has the ability to develop its own land to meet its goals for housing and economic development. The city should consider a study of City-owned properties to determine the best options for redevelopment.

VP.2.2.2

Capitalize on city-owned properties and air rights to Wellington parking lots to support new job growth.

To promote economic growth, including living wage jobs for Medford's residents, the City should evaluate all City-owned properties for suitability for different types of development, including commercial, 21st-century industrial, and life sciences or other emerging industries.

VP.2.2.3

Consider a redevelopment plan to create incentives to address underutilized parcels in key areas.

The Community Development Board, as the City's Redevelopment Authority, has the power to acquire, develop, and dispose of land under the M.G.L. Chapter 121B. The City should develop a redevelopment plan to allow the Community Development Board

to develop properties owned by the City in accordance with the plan. This action can be tied to 4.2.2.4 below, as a redevelopment authority with an active redevelopment plan, can establish design guidelines for the redevelopment area(s).

VP.2.2.4

Consider a Design Review Board and design guidelines or standards for new development types to address community concerns about context, massing, and neighborhood impacts.

The Design Review Board can act as an advisory board to the Community Development Board providing input on the

design of new construction or rehabilitation based on a set of design guidelines developed for one or more areas of the city.

SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

VP.3.1 CREATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR MEDFORD RESIDENTS, INCLUDING UNDER-RESOURCED POPULATIONS.

Strong educational and workforce development programs are a key component to providing career opportunities to Medford residents. Medford is home to prominent educational institutions and thriving professional industries, but not all residents currently have access to the education and training needed to benefit from these resources. Medford residents require new

opportunities to gain education and job skills to enter the workforce. Populations including youth, low-income residents, and communities of color face particularly large barriers to accessing the many professional and educational opportunities Medford has to offer. Additional programs are needed to bridge this gap and connect all residents with strong jobs and education.



VP.3.1.1

Create new workforce development opportunities within the City and partner with external organizations to bring regional resources to Medford.

Currently, the City of Medford does not directly offer workforce development programs to residents. Many regional workforce development organizations such as MassHire also do not have dedicated offices or programs in Medford. New initiatives should be created in Medford to bring workforce development resources to residents, including programming opportunities and physical spaces dedicated

to workforce support. The City should work internally to create new municipal programs, digital resources, and community spaces to facilitate job training and mentorship. Additionally, the City should develop relationships with regional workforce development organizations to identify opportunities to formally establish those resources in Medford.

VP.3.1.2

Create educational and workforce development programs to support local youths' professional development, including trade and technical career paths, in line with emerging industries in Medford including life sciences.

“Would love more local businesses to hire young people. Would help the community and set up young people of Medford to get another job when they’re older.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 2

Youth education and workforce development opportunities are critical to providing career pathways for children and young adults. The City should work to create new programs that provide these resources to youth of all ages and backgrounds. These initiatives should include traditional educational pathways as well as trade and technical career

options. A diverse range of fields should be accessible through these programs, especially industries such as life sciences that are emerging in Medford and will provide ample workforce opportunities in the future. Local schools and universities, workforce development organizations, trade schools, and labor representatives are valuable potential partners for developing these programs.

VP.3.1.3

Pursue partnership opportunities with Tufts University for educational and workforce development programs focused on youth, low-income residents, and residents of color.

As a world-renowned academic institution and one of Medford’s largest employers, Tufts University is a key anchor institution in the Medford community. Tufts has access to many resources and connections that can help Medford residents connect to professional and educational opportunities. University leadership has expressed interest

in partnering with the City in the past, and there is significant opportunity for such partnerships to be developed. In particular, programs created in partnership with Tufts should focus on those in Medford that may have the greatest educational and workforce needs, including youth, low-income residents, and residents of color.

SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES

VP.4.1 CREATE SUPPORT PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES FOR MEDFORD'S SMALL BUSINESSES AND MWBES.

Strong educational and workforce development programs are a key component to providing career opportunities to Medford residents. Medford is home to prominent educational institutions and thriving professional industries, but not all residents currently have access to the education and training needed to benefit from these resources. Medford residents require new

opportunities to gain education and job skills to enter the workforce. Populations including youth, low-income residents, and communities of color face particularly large barriers to accessing the many professional and educational opportunities Medford has to offer. Additional programs are needed to bridge this gap and connect all residents with strong jobs and education.



Figure 16. The Shop Local, Shop Medford program was created to support local, small businesses and immigrant businesses.



VP.4.1.1

Create technical support programs for small businesses and members of the workforce to improve digital literacy.

For many entrepreneurs and ambitious members of the workforce, digital literacy is a significant barrier to business development. Website creation and maintenance, online marketplace management, remote customer service, and other technical tasks have a steep learning

curve that can be inaccessible to many small business owners. The City should work internally and with external partners to develop technical support programs that address key digital literacy challenges based on the needs of local businesses.

VP.4.1.2

Designate an MWBE contact within the City and develop a City-operated MWBE directory and resources webpage.

MWBE programs and resources are valuable assets for eligible entrepreneurs. While Massachusetts offers MWBE certifications and resources at the state level, Medford does not currently have a dedicated MWBE support system. The City should first create a designated internal contact that will be available to MWBEs across the city. Once

this contact is in place, the City should also develop a webpage with resources for MWBEs, including a comprehensive MWBE directory. These efforts should seek to help MWBE owners connect with each other and with the City, and to make external resources available to them to support future business development needs.

*“Create small business opportunities for residents”
Public Meeting No. 3*

VP.4.1.3

Establish a target MWBE utilization rate for municipal contracts. Provide support and technical assistance to MWBE firms looking to contract with the City.

Municipal contracts are one of the primary ways that city governments can directly create economic opportunities for MWBE entrepreneurs. The City should conduct internal reviews to establish a reasonable yet challenging target utilization rate for MWBE contracts based on the services

and capacities of local MWBEs. Once this target is in place, the City should proactively work with MWBEs to provide support and technical assistance through the procurement process to ensure navigability for business owners.

MWBE Program Plan, Hampton, VA

In 2009, the City of Hampton, Virginia, reviewed its internal procurement processes and determined that the City was underutilizing MWBE contracts. One of the main reasons for this gap was that the City had not established a clear set of goals for MWBE procurement targets. As a result, the City developed an MWBE Program Plan

to improve the number of MWBE contracts it awarded. Among other steps, this plan established a dedicated MWBE office and directory, set annual goals for MWBE procurement participation, and streamlined the City's contracting requirements to make the procurement process easier for MWBEs and small businesses to navigate.

INCREASE ACCESS & ENJOYMENT OF MAJOR NATURAL RESOURCES

VP.5.1 EXPAND THE PUBLIC USE AND PROGRAMMING OF MEDFORD'S RIVERS.

One of Medford's most important and identifying characteristics is its relationship with the Mystic and Malden Rivers. "Celebrate the Rivers" was a commonly heard proposal in public meetings, the online maps, and one-on-one conversations with residents. The following actions provide ways to develop and expand programmatic offerings along the

rivers to better serve and engage Medford residents. Here, the rivers are both critical pieces of environmental infrastructure and vital amenities that give Medford its unique character. The rivers provide unique opportunities for development, multimodal connectivity, and ecological resilience.



Figure 17. Future investments in the riverfront should maximize pedestrian and bicycle access.



VP.5.1.1

Collaborate with private developers on riverfront or adjacent sites to expand pedestrian access and ensure compatible development patterns with the riverfront location.

"One missed opportunity in Medford Square is taking advantage of the riverfront"
Public Workshop No. 2

Throughout the public engagement process, residents expressed that the riverfront is underutilized and would be strengthened if additional investments were made to activate and develop this space. A pedestrian access plan will connect the riverfront

to the community and help reinforce the riverfront as a central asset. The city should engage and partner with private developers in the area to assess the feasibility of development and identify appropriate uses to promote riverfront activation.

VP.5.1.2

Collaborate to promote and advance projects promoted by DCR and MyRWA including the Clippership Connector, South Medford Connector, MacDonald Park, Mystic Lakes Linear Park, Wellington Greenway, Wellington Connector, and Condon Shell.

The City should partner with state, regional, and neighboring municipal governments and organizations to realize proposed and current regional projects that better connect the public to the rivers and other natural resources. These projects establish critical connections between commercial centers and residential areas. These multimodal

open space network plans connect Medford residents directly to nature, and in doing so, promote health and wellness and activity. Investing in these varying, interconnected projects will key Medford residents into the larger network of ecological features that run throughout the city and region.

VP.5.1.3

Manage forested areas, particularly invasive plant species, along the riverbanks to support ecological well being and create more open water views.

Climate change contributes to the proliferation of invasive species. Invasive species push out native plantings and disrupt healthy ecosystems by decreasing biodiversity, adaptability, and resilience of natural resources. The Medford Climate Action and Adaptation Plan recommends that the city develop an Invasive

Species Mitigation Plan by 2024. This recommendation, within a larger directive to restore and regenerate ecosystems for their overall health, can be strategically implemented to improve the overall appearance, usability, and manageability of forested areas.

INCREASE ACCESS & ENJOYMENT OF MAJOR NATURAL RESOURCES

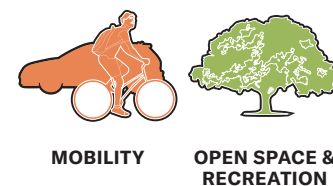
VP.5.2 CONTINUE TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO MAJOR NATURAL RESOURCES BY CREATING LINKAGES SUCH AS LINEAR PARKS AND DESIGNING MULTIMODAL TRANSIT NETWORKS BETWEEN NATURAL AREAS.

Previous plans and current planning efforts capitalize on the interconnectedness of Medford’s open spaces. Medford’s open spaces intertwine with the Mystic and Malden watersheds to create an intricate network

that can be connected to link pedestrian and cyclist access, improving multimodal transit throughout Medford and better connecting residents to green spaces.



Figure 18. Future investments in the riverfront should maximize pedestrian and bicycle access.



VP.5.2.1

Improve and expand open space opportunities along the Mystic and Malden Rivers, including programmed linear park spaces connected by accessible multi-use paths.

The first goal in the 2019-2026 Medford Open Space and Recreation Plan (OSRP) is to “Establish Connections to and along the City’s Natural Resources”. A key action to achieving this goal is to continue the

City’s progress towards a continuous pedestrian and cyclist trail system that is well maintained, well lit, and universally accessible.

VP.5.2.2

Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and car-free connections between parks and open spaces within Medford and in the region, focusing on major resources such as the Middlesex Fells and Wright’s Pond.

Just as our roadways need to be connected to one another and provide clear directional signage to ensure efficient movement, the City should ensure parks connect seamlessly with on-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This includes continuing on-street bike lanes and paths into larger parks that have vehicle access, continuing accessible

sidewalk installation beyond the parks’ boundaries, and ensuring that there are appropriately located crosswalks to support safe crossings between parks and other destinations. These efforts should focus on major regional parks, like the Middlesex Fells, Wright’s Pond, and the Mystic River Reservation.

“Cycling connections should be created along the river, linking with regional bike paths”
Public Workshop No. 2



Figure 19. Safer transit infrastructure, such as pedestrian crossings, enable safer routes for all ages, including safer walks to school for Medford’s youngest residents.

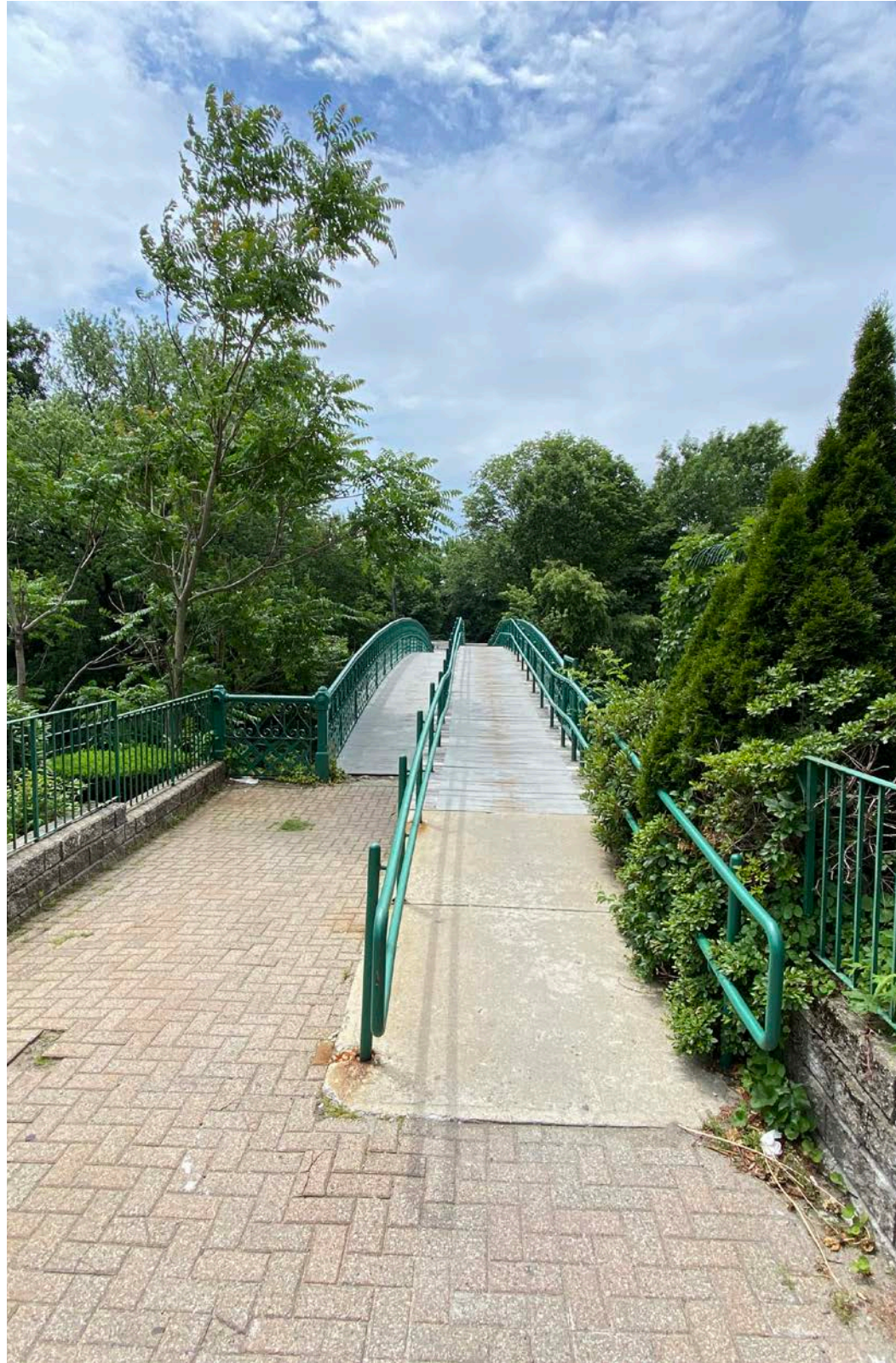


Figure 20. The Medford Pipe Bridge is in need of maintenance and care to restore this historic crossing to its former glory.

VP.5.2.3

Work with DCR to improve and restore the historic Medford Pipe Bridge and adjacent open space.

One of Medford’s most iconic and historical views is the view from the Main Street Bridge looking West towards the historic Medford Pipe Bridge. Built in 1897 as part of the Metropolitan Water Board’s northern high and low service. The bridge carries a 20” high-service pipe and a 48” low-service pipe between the Chestnut Hill Reservoir and Spot Pond that are cross connected with the Mystic Water Works pumping station in Somerville. The bridge was listed on the

National Register of Historic Places in 1990. Today, the bridge remains a significant bike and pedestrian connector between Medford Square and South Medford. Preserving the bridge and reinvesting in the public space on either side of the bridge would help to reinforce this connection, celebrate Medford’s history and celebrate the city’s unique relationship to the Mystic River.

VP.5.2.4

Collaborate with DCR to implement existing connectivity plans and projects, such as their Mystic River Master Plan and Parkways Master Plan.

The Mystic River Master Plan was released in 2009 and engages Medford, along with neighboring cities Arlington, Everett, and Somerville, to restore wildlife along the riverfront and optimize the area for recreation through investment in pathways and an open space network. The Parkways Master Plan envisions a healthy transportation network that connects greater Boston’s walkways and bikeways.

Released in 2020, the document includes both readily implementable smaller projects and longer term capital projects in which multimodal transit helps to connect the regional parkway system. Together, these two plans address similar concerns with overlapping strategies at different scales. Future efforts by the city should move forward to further both initiatives.



Figure 21. This plan should be implemented alongside additional plans to restore and develop the riverfronts, such as the Mystic River Master Plan, pictured.

WELCOMING & SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

Throughout the public engagement process, Medford residents expressed a desire to preserve and further cultivate a neighborly, caring, and inclusive community as Medford's population continues to grow and diversify. These values informed goals around equitable access to housing, historic preservation and neighborhood character, and the City's cultural identity and artistic expression.

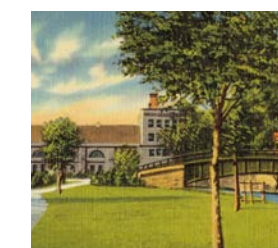
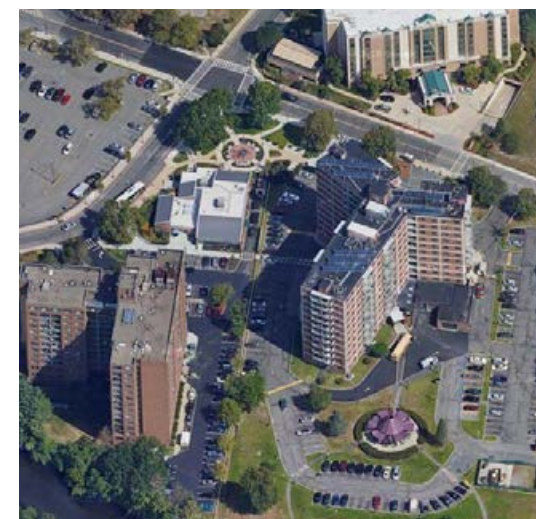
At 57,637 residents, Medford is projected to keep growing. There are 7,500 more low-income households in Medford than the number of affordable housing units. Limited housing supply and increasing rents has put constraints on many Medford families. Recent concerns from Medford's rental community warrant the creation of more affordable and "missing middle" housing and the installation of tenant protections to keep Medford within reach and prevent displacement.

The median age in Medford is 35, with an average household size of 2.41 people compared to 2.53 in the state of Massachusetts. As such, more housing stock needs to be made available to accommodate the needs of young people and smaller households. Only 67% of Medford's existing housing stock consists of residential multi-family housing, a much smaller proportion in comparison to nearby communities of Watertown (77%), Everett (82%) and Somerville (90%). At the same time, the City presents

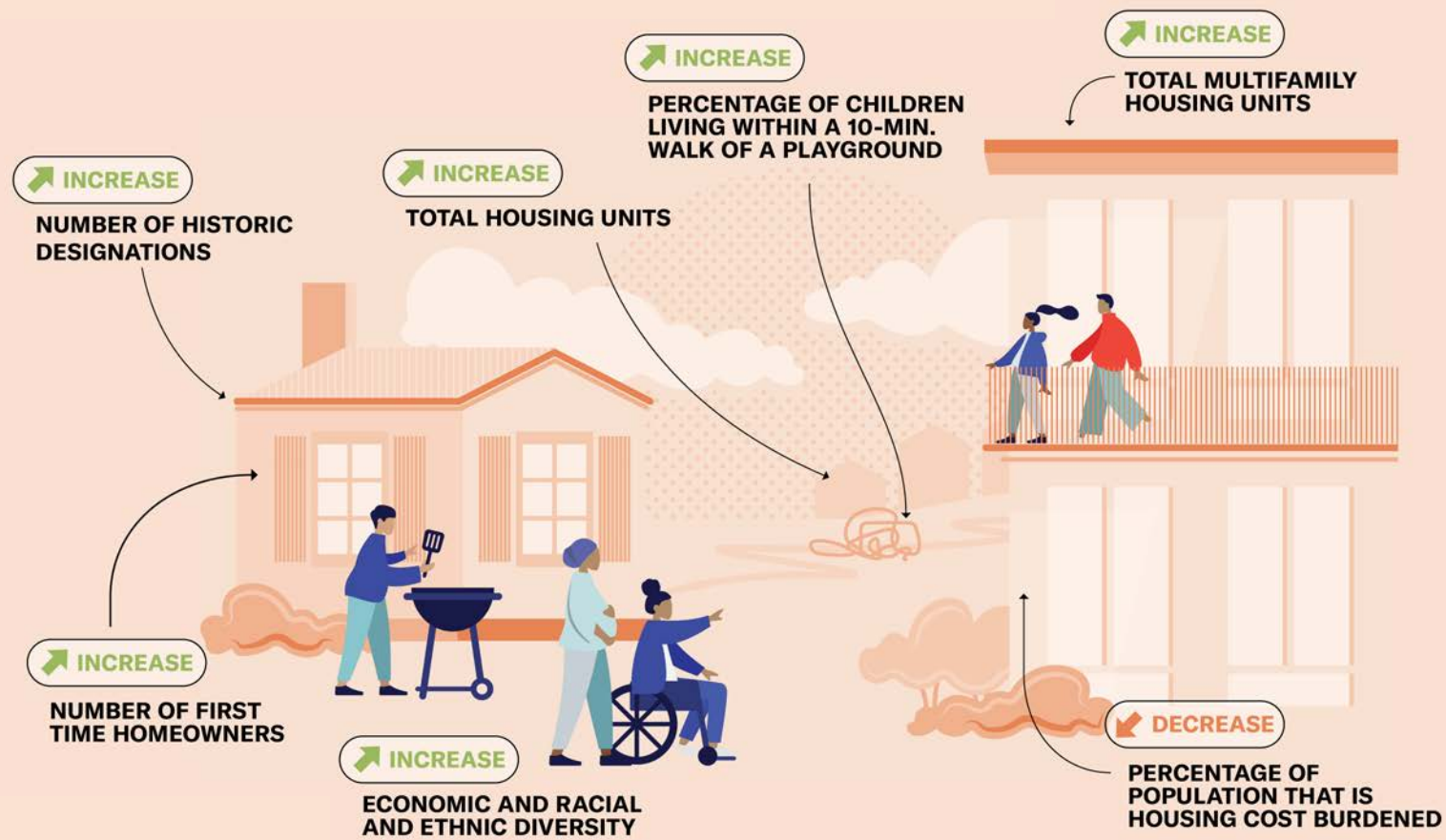
many opportunities for older residents to age-in-place, and should reinforce this strength.

Medford's urban fabric carries with it a rich tradition of cultural heritage. Founded in 1630 and incorporated in 1892, 98% of buildings were constructed prior to 2000, and the City boasts a number of historic sites. Historic and conservation lands make up 43% of open space in the city. Relative to the national average, Medford has an abundance of parks and open spaces: 31.4 park acres per every 1,000 residents, compared to the national average of 9.9. Park programming should diversify to appeal to different user types and communities with options across all four seasons. Recreational facilities are in need of maintenance and upgrading.

This plan proposes strategic and sustainable investment in the City's arts and culture sector to support the vision of a thriving, inclusive, and creative Medford. Creative placemaking initiatives will catalyze the arts and culture sector in the city. The city should provide the necessary social and civic infrastructure to adequately support arts and culture work, such as establishing specific fundings streams, reinstating a full-time arts and culture liaison, and supporting local artists through technical assistance and job opportunities.



WELCOMING & SUPPORTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS BENCHMARKS



GOALS

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ENLIVEN OPEN SPACE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES	183

HONOR HISTORY IN NEIGHBORHOODS

WS.1.1 HONOR HISTORY IN NEIGHBORHOODS

The histories of a community, both shared and individual, are an important part of its identity. The preservation of buildings and landscapes that have ties to those histories reinforces the unique identity of a community and the spaces people move through on a daily basis. Historical assets also include documents, photographs, drawings, and other physical reminders of a shared past. While the City has potential partners in the many organizations dedicated to arts, culture,

and history, some of them need additional assistance from the city to be effective. Preserving historic artifacts, whether a building or a document, is not enough. These artifacts must be shared to be meaningful. The City should promote the recognition and protection of its historic assets and seek ways to encourage partners – artists, historians, and nonprofits – to share these resources with the entire community.

“Medford itself is full of a deep rich history with some amazing figures and landmarks that don’t seem to be highlighted in a great way.”
Steering Committee Meeting No. 1



WS.1.1.1

Expand the marketing program for small businesses to include historic and cultural assets (Royall House and Slave Quarters, Brooks Estate, Chevalier Theater, etc.) that can act as draws for tourists - local and beyond.

Arts, history, and culture are important components of economic development. When leveraging resources for promoting small businesses, the City should include its cultural resources to provide more options

to encourage people to visit Medford. Paired offerings, such as discounts at a local restaurant for people visiting a cultural site (or vice versa) could be an effective cross-promotion.



Figure 1. Historic assets offer unique opportunities for developing Medford’s heritage tourism landscape.

WS.1.1.2

Hire a City liaison to work with historic, cultural, and arts groups and help more organizations and artists access City resources through a single point in City government (including permits and licenses for events.)

In meetings with representatives from Medford’s arts, cultural, and historic organizations, several people mentioned the difficulty they had navigating City requirements for permits and licenses for events. In the past, the City had a staff member who acted as a single point of contact for arts, cultural, and historic organizations. This staff member assisted the organizations, many of which are staffed by volunteers, with the applications and

process for getting events approved.

Such a liaison could also facilitate regular meetings of these representatives and help spread the word about City support for arts and cultural programs. Representatives from the Medford Arts Council noted that they have funds available to support the arts, but that they do not often receive applications from a broad group of artists, including emerging artists.



Historic Sites Map



-  **Historic Site on the National Register of Historic Places**
-  **Historic Site on the National Register of Historic Places**

Figure 2. Historic Sites Map

WS.1.1.3

Implement the recommendations of the Brooks Estate Master Plan.

The Brooks Estate Master Plan envisions the Brooks Estate as a self-sufficient events facility that could generate income from, among other events, conferences and weddings, while restoring the landscape for continued use by residents and providing meeting space for community organizations. The City should reach out the Town of

Dedham to discuss their experience with The Endicott Estate, which is owned by the Town and used for events. The Brooks Estate is an unusual asset to the community, and the master plan states that the condition of the Carriage House will require investment in the very near term if the site is to be viable as an income-generating entity.

WS.1.1.4

Evaluate City-owned properties for eligibility to be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places and CPA funding for restoration.

*“Preserve historic resources”
Public Workshop No. 1*

This action accomplishes two goals: (1) identify buildings, monuments, and sites that are important to Medford’s history, culture and identity and (2) identify buildings that could be eligible for preservation and programs, such as grants and tax credits, that could support such preservation. Some buildings may also be identified as contributing to a potential local historic district, and the City should explore

the creation of one or more local historic districts. Initial local historic districts would include Medford Square (including an expansion of the proposed boundary to include the Osgood House and the Angier House) and South Street. Evaluate the recommendations of the Historic District Commission’s new report that identifies tools for historic preservation and the potential for other local historic districts.

WS.1.1.5

Improve accessibility for people who have disabilities to historic buildings and parks.

Access to recreation and cultural and historic resources is an important component of being welcoming and inclusive. The City should create an inventory of access to important community resources and develop a plan to address deficiencies. In addition to physical access, such as ramps or elevators, signage

should be accessible to those with visual impairments. Where possible, interventions should be unobtrusive but accessible. For example, a landscaped path that navigates a change in slope is less obtrusive than a metal ramp.

WS.1.1.6

Support the preservation of historic documents, artifacts, and records.

The Historical Commission, the Medford Library, the Medford Historical Society & Museum, and staff from City Hall should collaborate on the appropriate inventory and preservation of historic materials. Such preservation should include archival

space and a budget for appropriate storage materials and restoration costs for damaged materials. The four partners could work with Tufts University or other local universities to determine priorities for archives and restoration.

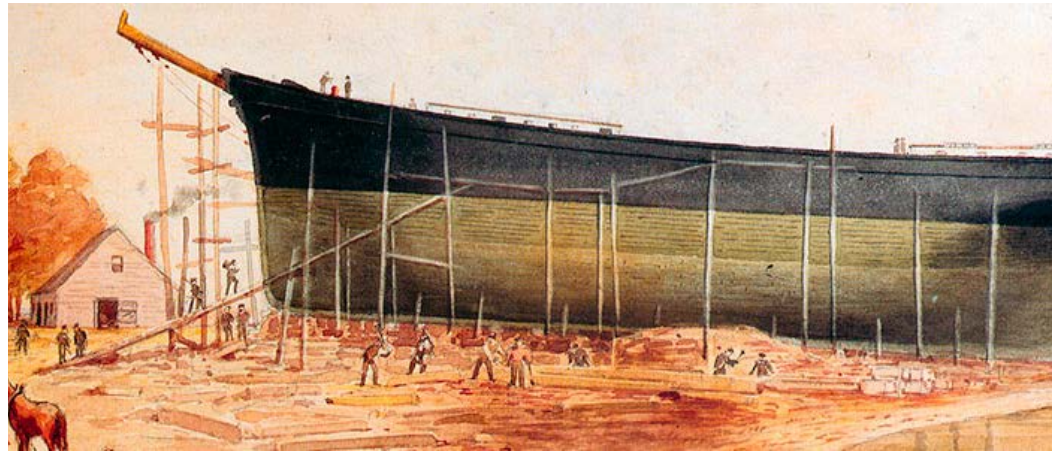


Figure 3. In the 1700s the population grew as the farming and shipbuilding industries did. Slavery was still legal at this time in Medford, and the city took an active role during the Revolutionary War.



Figure 4. In the 1800s, Medford became a "streetcar suburb" to Boston. It was established as a city in 1892.



WS.1.1.7

Make historic documents, artifacts, and records available to the public, including researchers and artists. Draw on written records, photographs, and artifacts for display throughout the City either of originals or reproductions as components of public art.

*"Accessing history can be challenging and require a deep dive - should be made more accessible."
Public Workshop No. 2*

Once stored and stabilized, historic materials from the City's collection should be made available to artists and researchers for inspiration and scholarship. The City could facilitate a conversation with private

groups, such as the Medford Historical Society & Museum and the Royall House & Slave Quarters, can collaborate on city-wide displays of history and art, and historic materials and objects can be used as inspiration for public art. See Objective WS.1.2 for ideas about how art can be incorporated into daily life.

WS.1.1.8

Evaluate historic structures for risk of damage by flooding (ex. Chevalier Theater) and consider this risk factor in targeting additional structures or areas for designation.

As part of planning for climate change, the City should evaluate the risks to historic structures from flooding, either riverine or from increased precipitation. Plans to address such flooding, which may require

either neighborhood-scale strategies or assistance to individual property owners, should be incorporated into overall plans for flood management and mitigation.

WS.1.1.9

Hire a full-time position to assist the Historical Commission and the Historic District Commission with administration and state compliance requirements.

Both commissions, established under state law and Medford's City ordinances, are staffed by volunteers and have responsibilities for state and local mandates. For example, the Historical Commission, reviews applications to demolish buildings over 75 years old, must identify properties and sites with historic significance, and provides expertise to the city on historic preservation. The

Historic District Commission currently oversees two local Historic Districts, which requires them to review the construction or alteration of buildings within the districts and issue certificates of appropriateness, non-applicability, or hardship. With important roles in the regulatory process, the two commissions need administrative assistance integrated within the City's Office of Planning, Development, and Sustainability.

HONOR HISTORY IN NEIGHBORHOODS

WS.1.2 INCORPORATE THE HISTORY OF THE CITY AND ITS NEIGHBORHOODS, THE CULTURES OF ITS RESIDENTS, AND THE ARTS INTO DAY-TO-DAY LIFE.

The following set of actions will require partnerships between the City and a wide range of organizations dedicated to arts and culture. Recommended actions under Objective 5.1.1 provide methods of

strengthening the City's support for arts, history and culture. The actions listed in this objective will, over time, integrate arts, history, and culture into the daily lives of Medford residents and act as a draw to visitors.



Figure 5. Community events like Circle the Square support the local arts and culture sector in Medford.



WS.1.2.1

Beautify the commercial centers and nodes by working with local artists to showcase neighborhood history and culture(s). This could include vacant storefronts and privately-owned public spaces.

WS.1.2.2

Develop a program for pop-up shops or art installations in empty ground floor space of commercial or mixed-use buildings.

MassDevelopment sponsors the Vacant Storefronts Program which provides funds for leasing and occupying vacant storefronts. While not all of Medford's commercial areas may qualify, the City could encourage a similar program of providing an incentive for landlords to allow public art

to be displayed in vacant storefronts. The program could be expanded to allow pop-up shops or galleries on a very short-term lease. The City would need to explore insurance options, which may be a barrier to these uses.

WS.1.2.3

Use a portion of the funding from the Medford Arts Council to support public art by local artists that draws on the histories and cultures of Medford's residents.

WS.1.2.4

Create an outreach program to educate new artists about the support available from the Medford Arts Council.

Expanding the profile of the Medford Arts Council to tie specific support to artists showcasing Medford culture and history

could also encourage emerging artists to apply for funding.

WS.1.2.5

Encourage permanent location(s) for the arts in a place that is easily accessible for residents.

A new arts center is part of a proposed new business and the new Medford Library will have meeting space and other amenities. However, members of the arts, culture, and history focus groups indicated a lack of space for different types of art, including

performance space. Accessible locations throughout the city would encourage more people to interact with and participate in local efforts to promote arts, history, and culture.



Figure 6. Institutional support, capacity, and technical assistance to artists and arts organizations is necessary to maintain a thriving arts and culture sector.

WS.1.2.6

This calendar could be managed by the recommended arts liaison in WS.1.1.

Support cross-collaboration among historic, arts, and cultural groups, including developing and supporting a central calendar of all historic, arts, and cultural events in the city.

WS.1.2.7

This action is tied to the recommendation for an expanded marketing plan in WS.1.1.

Tie the history of the Royall House and Slave Museum, the Brooks Estate, and the Thomas Brooks Park(location of the Slave Wall) to the history of the City by adding them to the marketing plan and showcasing the impact of the history of Black communities to the City in public art and historical references.

WS.1.2.8

This action is tied to the preservation and accessibility of historic materials and objects discussed in WS.1.1.

Engage students in the history, arts, and cultures of Medford, including youth and Tufts University groups.

WS.1.2.9

Source: <https://massculturalcouncil.org/blog/tag/cultural-districts/>

Consider creating one or more cultural districts in Medford (Medford Square, West Medford).

The MassCultural Council provides grants to support activities in designated cultural districts, and a number of examples of relevant case studies for cultural districts

on its website. The City should explore creating one or more cultural districts to take advantage of these funds to support the actions above.

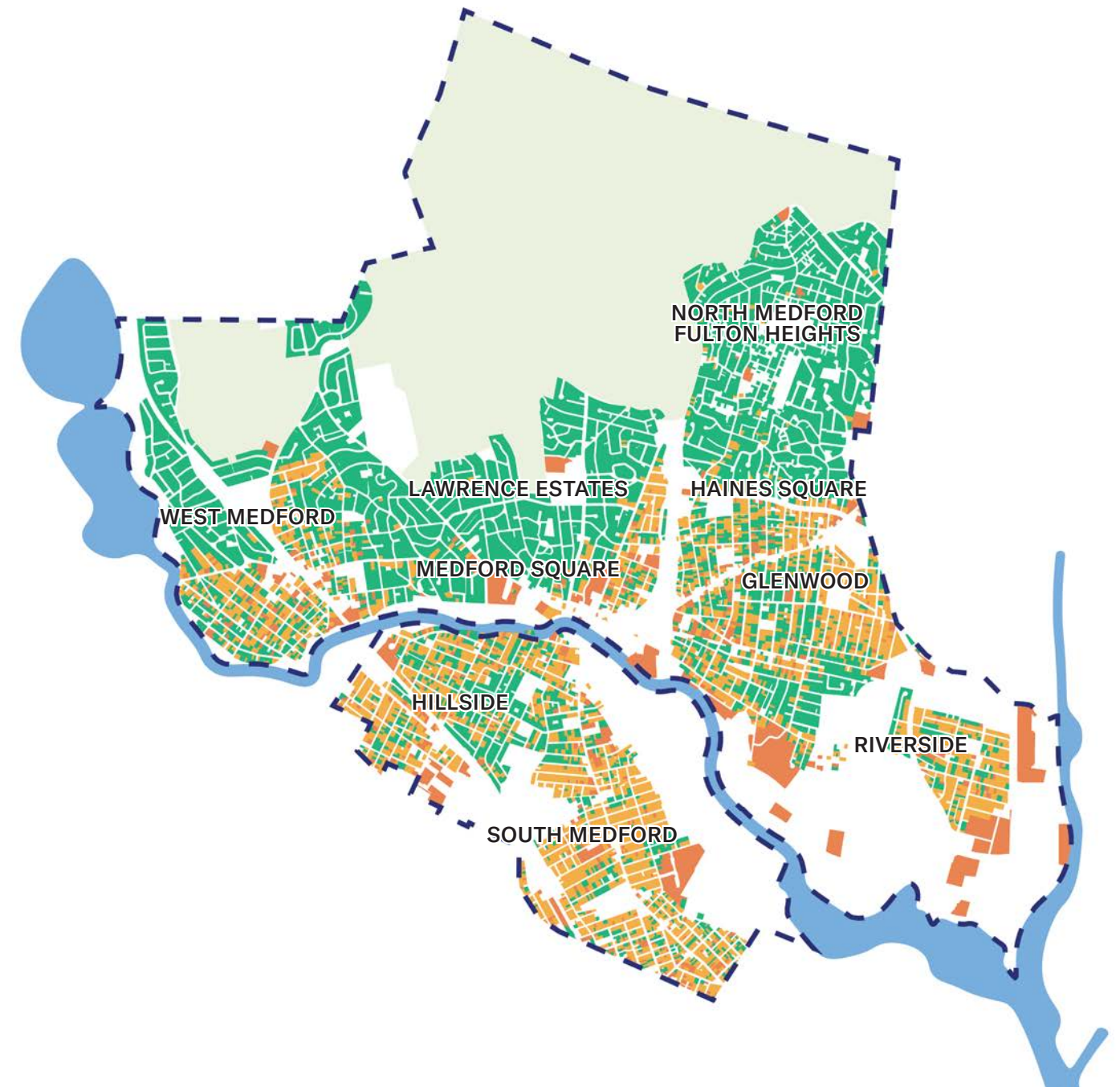
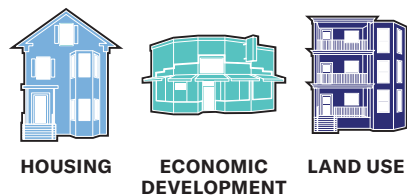
ENSURE AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR ALL

WS.2.1 CREATE, EXPAND, AND PROTECT MIXED-INCOME HOUSING OPTIONS THROUGHOUT THE CITY TO CREATE A MINIMUM OF 600 UNITS BY FY2025 AS CALLED FOR IN THE 2021 HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN.

Medford's Housing Production Plan outlines crucial steps that the City must take to meet housing needs in the years to come. Medford needs to develop new housing to meet demand and grow as a vibrant mixed use city. Commercial centers should be high-priority location for new development, as the economic amenities and multimodal transportation access in these areas can provide valuable resources to new residents. Increased density where appropriate can improve walkability and transit connectivity for many residents. Across the city, new medium-density housing typologies are needed to bridge the gap between standalone single-family homes and large high-rise buildings.

As the city continues to grow and develop new housing, affordability must be a priority. The average rental cost and home value in Medford both exceed what the average resident can afford. There are as many as 7,500 more households in Medford today that qualify for subsidized housing than there are available subsidized units. While the City has taken steps to improve housing affordability, further work is needed to ensure that all residents have an affordable, high-quality place to live.

"I do love the mix of housing types in my neighborhood. We have three-family houses, duplexes, single families, and buildings with multiple apartments."
Steering Committee Meeting No.1



Medford Current Residential Land Use Map

Figure 7. Medford Current Residential Land Use Map

- LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL

WS.2.1.1

Update zoning to allow for multifamily dwellings of different typologies in different zoning districts, such as APT-1, APT-2, C-1, and C-2.

As part of the City’s zoning review, planning staff should consider how to allow multifamily units at scales and typologies appropriate to each district. A Multiple Dwelling use is defined in the Zoning Ordinance as any structure of three or more dwelling units or one or more dwelling units and a nonresidential use. Class A multiple dwellings are not more than three stories in height. Class B multiple dwellings are not more than 75 feet or six stories in height. This definition does not include a group of three or more attached single-family dwellings.

Three residential districts (APT-1, APT-2, and APT-3), one commercial district (C-1) and the MUZ allow Multiple Dwellings as of right. APT-1 only allows Multiple Dwelling Class A. The distribution of these districts throughout the City is interesting. There are multiple areas zoned APT-1, APT-2, and C-1, but only one area zoned MUZ and none

on the Zoning Map dated September 2011 showing APT-3.

The C-1 district, in particular, includes a wide range of development patterns. This district is applied to Medford Square and West Medford Square, smaller clusters throughout the City, some of Salem Street, and some large lots in the Wellington area.

Now that the recodification process is complete, the City should evaluate the different housing typologies and affordability levels, as discussed below, to understand whether the areas of the City examined during this planning process are zoned for appropriate levels of multifamily housing and whether the current definitions and approval thresholds are appropriate for the housing strategies discussed elsewhere in this plan. Examples of zoning districts to look at in particular include C-1, C-2, APT-1, and APT-2.

WS.2.1.2

Actively pursue mixed-income and mixed-use residential development opportunities for vacant and underutilized lots in Medford’s business districts, such as existing surface parking lots and property owned by state agencies.

Medford’s business districts have several significant vacant or underutilized lots, such as surface parking lots in Medford Square and the MBTA bus lot in Haines Square. These lots have great potential for redevelopment to help Medford achieve the goals of the Housing Production Plan (HPP). In alignment with the recommendations from the HPP, the City should adopt a new zoning tool to permit affordable infill development on smaller public and private lots and then transfer City-owned vacant

and underutilized lots to a new Medford Affordable Housing Trust. Request for Proposals (RFPs) can be issued from the Trust for the development of affordable infill development in these lots. An initiative of this kind can be paired with new zoning provisions to encourage private owners to also work with nonprofit mission-driven developers to create affordable housing in the city.

WS.2.1.3

Identify appropriate housing types between four-family and the more recent large developments to address a missing segment of housing size and affordability.

A majority of Medford residents live either in single-family homes or in large residential buildings with 10 or more units. With several more large projects currently in the development pipeline, Medford has a need to fill the missing middle segment of medium density housing in buildings with two to nine units. These projects can increase density at an appropriate scale to maintain neighborhood identity. Affordability

measures can also be implemented to help these projects contribute to the City’s housing affordability goals. The City should identify housing typologies that would most effectively meet these criteria and incentivize future developments to follow these priorities, including affordability requirements.

Blue Dot Place, Colorado Springs, CO

Blue Dot Place, a 33-unit multifamily mixed-use development in Colorado Springs, Colorado, opened to the public in 2016. The project was the first multifamily development built in downtown Colorado Springs since the 1960s. The space offered three commercial units in addition to its 33 residential units. At a height of 4 stories, the project increases the density of the downtown district and adds valuable

commercial assets without dramatically altering the streetscape or neighborhood character. The project also catalyzed a large surge of investment, with over \$1.5 billion invested in the downtown district since the project began construction in 2013. Blue Dot Place was nominated for Best Infill Project by the Urban Land Institute and is featured as a national case study on medium density, transit-oriented infill development.

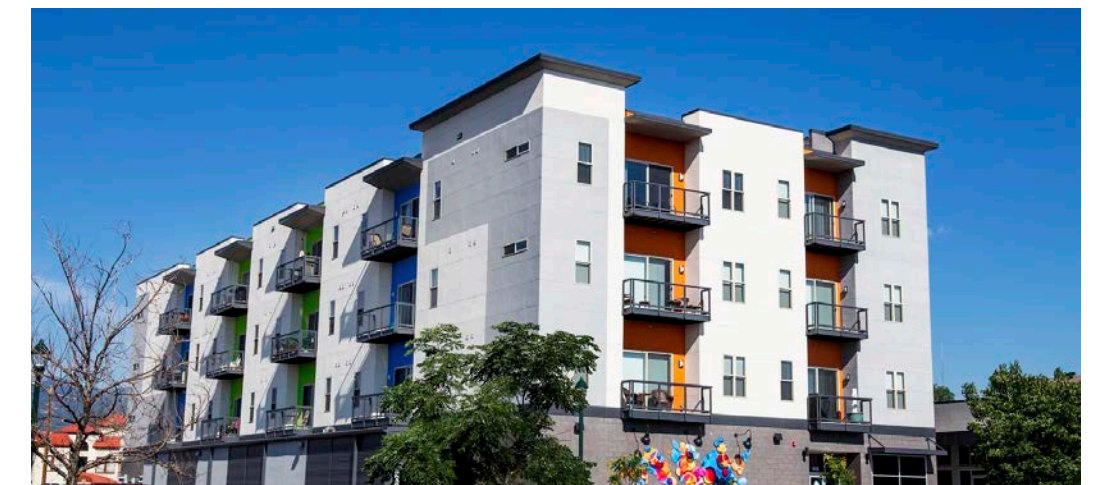


Figure 8. New housing development should prioritize Medford’s growing need for multi-family housing and address the “missing middle.”

WS.2.1.4 Consider allowing smaller, infill housing on nonconforming lots to add to housing stock.

Various lots can be found across Medford that currently contain nonconforming uses, such as residential buildings in commercial and industrial areas. Because current uses do not match the zoning ordinance, development and improvement on these lots requires a challenging permitting

process including special permit reviews. The City should identify such lots and explore options for granting allowances for small infill housing developments to fill underutilized space and provide much-needed new housing units.

WS.2.1.5 Review impact of inclusionary housing ordinance and consider changes, such as cash-in-lieu for units or partial units.

In 2019, Medford amended its zoning codes to include an inclusionary housing ordinance, which requires developments of 10 or more units to create affordable units in order to receive City approval. The City should review this ordinance further to identify additional opportunities to maximize the provision of affordable units created by the program. For example, the ordinance may be amended to allow

cash-in-lieu payments or partial units to replace full new unit construction. These amendments can create more flexible options for delivering affordable housing and simplify the permitting process for larger developments. Alternatively, in-lieu fees may be incorporated into the City's linkage requirements instead of the inclusionary housing ordinance.

WS.2.1.6 Enable smaller and more diverse housing options through zoning updates.

Zoning updates to allow for or encourage a wider range of housing options, including smaller units, allow new affordable development while preserving the local character of Medford's neighborhoods and business districts. Allowing conversions of larger single-family homes to two-family or multi-family homes could be another way

to encourage diverse market-rate housing options throughout the city. The City can collaborate with the Housing Authority, nonprofit organizations, or the Historical Commission to investigate potential reuse of these larger, older homes and assist homeowners with tenant selection, income verification, and affordability monitoring.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)

One option for smaller units is an Accessory Dwelling Unit, known as an ADU, which is a self-contained housing unit on the same lot as a principal dwelling. Medford recently underwent a recodification process that included the introduction of provisions to allow for ADUs as of right in an existing

principal dwelling or by special permit from the Zoning Board of Appeals in an existing detached structure on the same lot, provided certain conditions are met (see Medford Zoning Ordinance Section 8.2 Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)).

WS.2.1.7 Update zoning to foster affordable infill development.

Affordable housing in Medford is concentrated only in the denser parts of the city. The concerns of community members about not having affordable single-family housing in single-family neighborhoods reinforces this need for a spatially distributed arrangement of

affordable units in the city. In alignment with the recommendations from the Housing Production Plan, the city should adopt a new zoning tool to permit affordable infill development on land that is smaller than zoning allows on SF-1 and SF-2 zones.

WS.2.1.8 Continue to foster partnerships and relationships with mission-driven and non-profit developers to amplify the work of the City, Housing Authority, and existing local housing organizations.

Mission-driven and nonprofit developers are valuable partners for the City in its efforts to create new affordable housing. These groups bring expertise in the affordable housing development sector that is rooted in a commitment to maximize the public benefits

of their projects. The City should continue to build new relationships with these entities to pursue new project opportunities and supplement the work of the City, the Medford Housing Authority, and existing local housing organizations.

WS.2.1.9 Create neighborhood or area specific design guidelines for the Planning Board to use at site plan review that consider history/development patterns.

As Medford attracts new development, preserving existing neighborhood character is a priority for many residents and leaders. The City can achieve its development goals while thoughtfully responding to these concerns by creating locally-tailored design guidelines for use in Planning Board site plan reviews. These

guidelines should be informed by local input and analyses of important historical patterns to ensure that new development is complementing, rather than disrupting, existing neighborhood identities. As neighborhood plans are developed in each commercial district, these guidelines should be incorporated into them.

"Infill development - some is great, some is not so great. How does a Comp Plan set the stage for zoning and design guidelines in the future?"
Steering Committee Meeting No. 2

ENLIVEN OPEN SPACE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

WS.3.1 DIVERSIFY THE CHARACTER AND USE OF PARKS, FACILITIES, AND OPEN SPACES.

Most of Medford's park amenities and programs are traditional recreation amenities for children between the ages of 5 and 12 years, which represents about 9% of Medford's population. Diversifying the character, use, and appeal of these spaces for a broader audience will help to enliven these spaces throughout the daytime and seasons.

It is important that Medford residents, workers, and visitors see these spaces

as contributors to community-building, public health, and the City's ecological and social resilience goals. Communicating the importance of Medford's public space begins by inviting the public into these spaces and ensuring that they feel welcome and can see their interests and values reflected in the design and programming of Medford's open space and community facilities.

"Enliven open space programming through the City's relationship with DCR." Steering Committee Meeting No. 5



WS.3.1.1

Incorporate arts programs including the visual arts, dance, music, and spoken word into events in parks, recreation, and open space.

"Want more cultural events! Music, dancing, art..." Steering Committee Meeting No. 2

Enabling a wide range of creative expression and storytelling in Medford's community spaces is one way the city can support community-togetherness, open new dialogues with and among neighbors and better communicate Medford's history and foster cultural participation. Leveraging

the arts would help to bolster event attendance and showcase the diversity of backgrounds and cultures that make Medford such a vibrant place. Continuing to work in partnership with local arts groups is essential to successful and long-lasting incorporation of arts programming in open space and community facilities.

WS.3.1.2

Reduce recreation program tuition and entry fees to promote inclusivity.

Program tuition and entry fees are a significant barrier-to-entry which disproportionately affect low income residents. Reducing, or eliminating program tuition and event fees for City-sponsored programs or events will help to make these resources more accessible to a wider range of Medford Residents.

Reducing fees and tuition will help the City reach its equity goals, however; doing

so does present a new set of challenges. Membership and entry fees for Medford's pools and Wright's Pond help to fund these amenities; the City should consider alternative funding sources through grants, donors, and creative progressive taxes. For recreation events with a limited number of openings, the City should consider a lottery-style admittance.

WS.3.1.3

Use future capital improvements to expand amenities in Medford's larger parks.

Expanding amenities and programs in Medford's larger parks, such as Tufts Park, Harris Park, and others, would help to diversify the range of activities that occur in the parks and broaden the parks' appeal across a wider range of residents, workers, and visitors. Park and playground

reinvestment should reflect the diverse cultures and generational needs, to ensure that important neighborhood spaces are well-used. Amenities such as adventure playgrounds, dog parks, community gardens, restrooms, and event support facilities like electric hook-ups.



Figure 10. Park amenities should meet the diverse needs and wishes of Medford residents.

WS.3.1.4

Track and respond to open space programming trends that reach a range of ages such as pickleball, skate parks, cricket, and trails.

To understand community needs and desires, the best place to start is by asking the community. It is important to start a dialogue with residents and visitors to parks and facilities to determine the needs, wants, and desires for open space programming. The best way to ensure that programming investments are loved and used by the neighborhoods they serve is

to ask what people want to see in their parks. National open space program trends include amenities like pickleball courts, skate parks, cricket fields, and trail systems. The City should maintain an open dialogue with residents, workers and visitors to understand what park improvements are desired where and prioritize the feedback.

WS.3.1.5

Invest in water play with shade and benches within walking distance of all neighborhoods.

[There are] "not enough shade trees, creating numerous heat islands."
Public Workshop No. 2

Infrastructure that supports civic health, including heat mitigation, is increasingly critical due to rising temperatures caused by climate change. Environmental justice communities are disproportionately impacted by urban heat island effect, so

efforts to remedy rising temperatures must be distributed equitably across Medford's neighborhoods. Water play, public cooling sites, benches, and shading all provide cooling and relief at different scales and for different needs and age groups, as well as communal gathering spaces in extreme heat.

WS.3.1.6

Improve signage, wayfinding, and interpretation in Medford parks, trails, and plazas.

Upgrades and additions to Medford park signage will help with wayfinding and may also provide the opportunity to educate the public on history, ecology, and other relevant information.



Figure 9. Signage is a vital tool in parks and open space infrastructure for wayfinding and providing informative content to park visitors.

ENLIVEN OPEN SPACE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

WS.3.2 CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARD COMPLETION OF REGULAR AND DEFERRED MAINTENANCE NEEDS.

Many City departments help to manage and maintain Medford's wide ranging portfolio of community-serving facilities, open spaces, and infrastructure. This decentralized responsibility and decentralized budgets also creates a competitive atmosphere between different departments for operational funding priorities, which has resulted in a backlog of projects to maintain spaces and fix issues

within facilities, otherwise known as deferred maintenance, and "band-aid" repairs. This plan supports the recommendations made by the City of Medford's FY 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan and expands or summarizes many of those actions listed here:



WS.3.2.1

See 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Develop a system for park facility management / maintenance.

WS.3.2.2

See 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Address the need for dedicated, focused, and specialized facilities management personnel and operations.

WS.3.2.3

See 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Address capital needs at Medford High School, fire department facilities, and public grounds and park facilities.

WS.3.2.4

See 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Address capital needs for street and sidewalk repairs and replacement of water mains.



Figure 11. *Street and sidewalk repair and maintenance are critical needs.*

WS.3.2.5

See 2021-2026 Capital Improvement Plan

Audit existing facilities for universal accessibility and retrofit where needed.

Work with the disability commission to inventory and identify actionable next steps to make all city-owned facilities and open spaces universally accessible.

ENLIVEN OPEN SPACE & COMMUNITY FACILITIES

WS.3.3 PROVIDE ACTIVITIES AND SPACES TO GATHER FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

By utilizing creative solutions to expand programmable space, Medford can host more activities, classes, sports, and events that bring neighbors together and create more opportunities for people to connect. This objective supports the expansion and maintenance of existing facilities, as well as the creation of new facilities such as the current Medford Public Library building (completed in 2022), in order to sufficiently

meet resident demand. Specialized programming can provide affinity spaces by age, population and interests, supporting older adults, families, kids, and teens. Through these targeted programming efforts, the City should work to identify any gaps in engaging underserved groups, accommodating requested activities and providing the corresponding facilities to host these events.

*“Open spaces should also include places to sit down and use the restroom, better accommodating kids and seniors”
Public Workshop No. 2*



WS.3.3.1

Support classes and activities at the Senior Center that will engage older adults in subjects such as computers, technology, poetry, and writing.

Provide the necessary resources to support the expansion of program offerings that cater to older adults, providing lifetime learning, combating social isolation, and making Medford a great place to age-in-place.

WS.3.3.2

Promote the new Medford Library’s diverse program spaces widely and ensure that technology and equipment available in these spaces are accessible to different users across age, ability, and language.

Promote the History Room, Children’s Reading Room, Teen Reading Room, Technology Lab, Maker Space, and Public Meeting and Performance Space, to residents interested in attending or hosting programming in these spaces. Allocate the proper resources, from funding to staffing needs and training, and access needs, to make sure that computer, presentation, and fabrication technology is accessible and user-friendly.

WS.3.3.3

Increase the number of performance spaces throughout the city, especially smaller scale performance spaces, and support existing performance spaces. (Note: this could include restaurants which currently require a special permit, Tufts, the Royall House, or other spaces).

Provide additional performance spaces to meet the demand for arts and cultural infrastructure within Medford. Focusing on smaller performance spaces will keep the facilities to an appropriate size and scale for the city and partner arts organizations to effectively operate and manage.

WS.3.3.4

Create a program to encourage and support neighborhood block parties or citywide celebrations.

Promote creative placemaking projects at the neighborhood and city level. Look to similar events and festivals that have

been successfully replicated in similar city contexts, such as PorchFest in Somerville.

PorchFest

Originally held in Ithaca, New York in 2007, Porchfest is now in more than 150 cities around the world and in at least 15 communities in New England as of 2022. What began as a conversation between neighbors wanting to share music with others blossomed into a much larger initiative. In Somerville, bands perform on their own porches and audiences move

throughout the city's neighborhoods to hear the variety of local artists. The event is supported locally as a program of the Somerville Arts Council which helps to organize the event, register artists, and provide online resources and crucial supportive infrastructure on the weekend of the event.



Figure 12. Porchfest is an example of an event that is easily replicable and can be brought to program and activate Medford neighborhoods.

WS.3.3.5

Continue the partnership with Medford Public Schools regarding the use of active sports fields, and improve operations of school-owned and city-operated recreational facilities.

Coordinate with Medford Public Schools to streamline the recreational field permit process so it is most effective for both parties and for residents. Make field

use and bookings publicly accessible to promote informal use during gaps between reservations.



Figure 13. The City of Medford should continue to partner with the public school system to jointly provide facilities, operations, and programming for recreational activities.

WS.3.3.6

Design/create universal design park spaces.

Utilize universal design principles to create spaces that are accessible to a wide range of people and diverse user needs regardless of age, size or disability status. Support existing efforts by the

Commission for Persons with Disabilities to make Medford Parks and Open Space more accessible through the implementation of recommendations from the parks accessibility audit process.

IMPLEMENTATION

**THIS SECTION IS UNDER REVIEW BY THE CITY
AND WILL BE UPLOADED AS A SEPARATE
DOCUMENT SHORTLY.**